

橘公司

The author
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Creation NIA

SpiritNo.2

AstralDress-SisterType Weapon-BookType[Rasiel]

LIVE

DATE



三垂クリエーション



ファンタジア文庫



「えへへへ、いいよいいよー少年。もしかして足派だった？」

第9の精霊——二重

にあ

「アキバよ！
あたしは帰ってきた！」

「二亜はなんていうか……フル装備だな」

高校生——五河士道

いつか しどう



「く……漆黒の涙が純白の聖地に!」
精霊——八舞耶俱矢

「……大丈夫……だから」
精霊——七罪

「……問題ない。これくらいは修正可能」

精霊——鳶三折紙

「動揺。定規の下に
インクが滲んでしまいました」

精霊——八舞夕弦



「皆さんいつも応援ありがとうございます」

精霊 美九



「ちょっと恥ずかしいですけど……頑張ります……っ!」

精霊 四糸乃

「おお、さうしてやいだー!」

精霊 十香

「勝負はここからよ」

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「駄目だよ。そんなことしちや」

魔術師 アルテミシア・B・アシュクロフト

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精霊

THE SPIRIT

隣界に存在する特殊災害指定生命体。発生原因、存在理由ともに不明。
こちらの世界に現れる際、空間震を発生させ、周囲に甚大な被害を及ぼす。
また、その戦闘能力は強大。

対処法1

WAYS OF COPING 1

武力を以てこれを殲滅する。

ただし前述の通り、非常に高い戦闘能力を持つため、達成は困難。

対処法2

WAYS OF COPING 2

——デートして、デレさせる。

二重クリエイション

Creation NIA

SpiritNo.2

AstralDress-SisterType Weapon-BookType[Rasiel]

Prologue - And above anything, the time is not enough.

- 3 AM in the morning. In the Spirit Mansion next to Itsuka's house, in a room that looked almost like a workshop of a Manga-ka, Shidou, Kaguya, Origami and Yuzuru rise up their voice that they finished inking their pages.

- After Shidou passed his manuscript to Yuzuru to scan, he stand up and make a stretch. Shidou yawns, rub his eyes and walk to the fridge. He then take out two bottles of energy drink and gulp down one of them.

- Shidou take another bottle of energy drink to the back of the room, to the spirit who is still concentrating at her table. The one who is likely to be in the most extreme condition.

"...Natsumi, how about taking a little rest?"

"....."

- Natsumi who is moving her hands on a manuscript with an unearthly expression did not responded back. She continue concentrating on the paper in front of her.

"...Heeeeey, Natsumi~"

"....."

- Shidou called her again but still without response. Shidou then open the lid of the energy drink bottle, put a straw in it and bring it toward Natsumi's mouth. Natsumi then start drinking the energy drink without averting her eyes away from the manuscript.

- Natsumi put her mouth away from the straw once she finished drinking and continue concentrating on her work. Shidou make a wry smile and back to his desk.

"Well then... let's continue the next page."

- Said that, Shidou then grip his pen and look at the draft before him. Seeing Shidou, Origami and others also resume their work. Shidou and others are gathering in the room to accomplish one thing — to finish a manga.



Chapter 1 - Don't panic, this is Spirit's trap.

- Shidou is lying down on a bed that is moving into a large inspection machine. He feels as if he's being gulped down by a huge animal. A light from the machine scans through his body for a few times before releasing the bed together with him.

- Shidou opened his eyes after he heard Kotori's voice saying "—Okay, that is enough." Kotori in a red military uniform with Chupa Chups in her mouth is standing next to him.

"How's condition?"

"Yeah, I'm fine... but how long I have to continue doing this? It has been over half a month..."

- Shidou made a wry smile and rose up. Even though he always has inspection like this every time he sealed any spirits, the difference between before and now is how long the inspection continued.

- Kotori sighs at Shidou's reaction and reminds him about his condition back at the beginning of the month when the Path between him and spirits got narrowed. After that incident, Kotori started caring more about Shidou's body than before.

"S-Sorry... I couldn't really feel it since my memory was really vague..."

- When Shidou said that in an apologetic tone, Kotori then awkwardly averts her eyes from him. The conversation stopped for a moment without Kotori saying any sarcasm back at him. This is because of her responsibility for what happened.

- It's not that Shidou wants Kotori to be angry. As an Onii-chan, he feels unbearable to see Kotori being not so energetic. Shidou changes his position on the bed and hugs Kotori.

"What~, don't be so sulky~. Onii-chan is lonely~."

"Wh...!? What are you doing!?"

"Right~, Kotori~?"

"Ahh! Don't stick to me!"

- Kotori turned her face red and do a karate chop on Shidou's head. Shidou feel Kotori is coming back to her usual self and make a small smile. Kotori ask if Shidou has gone crazy, but Shidou answer he's now fine thanks to her chop.

- Kotori turned her face red again and avert her face away. Shidou start patting Kotori on her head. Kotori shake a little but let Shidou continue patting her head. While they're doing that, a cough is then heard. Kotori shook her body in surprise and knock Shidou's hand away.

- Reine is standing in the direction the cough was heard. Kotori tell her that it was quick and ask her about the result. Reine explain to them that the machine also has Realizer in it, even though it may not be as powerful as the one in <Fraxinus>. She then tell them the result.

- Shidou's spirit power reaction is now stable below the standard level. Without doing detailed inspection with equipment like this, Shidou's spirit power shouldn't be detectable. The Path between him and Spirits are also back to normal. Reine suggest to do only periodical check like before from now on.

- Shidou tell Reine he's glad and stretch his body. Since <Fraxinus> is still under repair, he have to come here to the underground facility every time he have to do inspection. Moreover, now is already near the end of December.

- Even though the school is in the middle of winter break, Shidou is going to be very busy for the New Year as he is the one who take care of the house. It helps a lot if he could use the time for inspection for something else instead. Saw Shidou's reaction, Reine noted to him that he is fine only for his body. Heard that, Shidou make a severe look.

"What do you mean... don't tell me, something happened to the Spirits!?"

"...No, that's not what I meant. ...The follow-up for the physical records you made while you were sick and your persuade to Ai, Mai, Mii and Miss Okamine are still not done."

"Cough!"

"...I'm following-up about your physical records. The 50-meters running record is problematic... but I'll say it's either due to an intense wind or maybe the cold medicine you have back then accidentally has an ingredient that considered to be a dope."

"I think that's also kinda problematic..."

- Even still, it's better than having everyone found out about the existence of the Spirits. Shidou then nod to Reine. However, the problem is the other part. Reine then continue,

"...You could say it was a joke for Ai, Mai and Mii. Don't forgot to explain to them if you meet them. The problem is Miss Okamine. I made her cancel the reservation for wedding reception..."

"Cough! Cough! Wedding reception!?"

"...Ah. I covered up the details and tried explaining to her. Even though she now understand, she still want to hear it directly from you that it was a mistake. I'll arrange for you two to met later, make sure to clear it up within the winter break."

"...I-I'm sorry to trouble you..."

- Shidou bow to Reine while sweating on his forehead. After that, an alarm is heard from Reine's uniform's pocket. Reine explain that she had another business after this. Shidou tell her that he's leaving. Kotori also wave her hand to Shidou telling him she will be back by dinner.

- Kotori ask if Shidou need a car. Shidou say no since he is going to do some shopping. Shidou change his clothes in the changing room and walk in the hallway. It's already 2 PM. Shidou continue thinking about tonight's menu in his head. After walking for a while, footsteps is heard from his front.

"Oh, Shidou-kun, are you going back now?"

"Has the inspection finished?"

- Nakatsugawa Munechika and Shiizaki Hinako called him. Shidou answer to Shiizaki that his condition is now fine. Seeing plastic bag on their hands, he ask them if they just came back from shopping. Shiizaki nod at him and note that she couldn't really go out while working in <Fraxinus>, but now it's much easier to do so.

- Shidou nodded to them. The entrance of the underground facility is in a multi-tenant building in Tenguu City. That's also the reason why Nakatsugawa and other crew are wearing a normal businessperson uniform rather than <Ratatoskr>'s. Both of them also have a employee ID card hanging from their neck.

- Even still, Nakatsugawa wish <Fraxinus> to recover soon. As a man, nothing can beat the pride of working in an air warship. Shidou make a wry smile at Nakatsugawa's enthusiasm, even though as a boy, he could understand what Nakatsugawa was trying to say.

- Shidou ask them what they bought. Shiizaki show him a candy and stuff that Kotori asked her to buy. Shidou guess "Chupa Chups?". Shiizaki make a smile and say "As expected from Onii-san." Nakatsugawa then show the content of his plastic bag. It is a candy and B5 manga magazine "Weekly Shonen Blast."

- Shidou asked Nakatsugawa back. Nakatsugawa tell him it is the latest issue that went on sale today. He asked if Shidou have ever read it. Shidou answer it's harder to find someone of his age who never read Shonen Blast.

- Shidou incline his head wondering about the meaning of Nakatsugawa's question. Nakatsugawa saw Shidou's reaction and twist his lips. He then point at the bottom left of the cover.

Shidou ask him what's it then look at where Nakatsugawa is pointing at. Shidou widen his eyes. Nakatsugawa then nodded in satisfaction.

"Yes. 'SILVER BULLET,' Honjou Souji's series that went over a long halt just resume publication!"

"Whoa, that's true. I read it before. Isn't this the series that halted publication out of sudden few years ago and nothing is heard about ever since?"

"That's right! Some say the author and the editor have a dispute, some say the author have a sudden illness, some say he's using backache as a reason for the halt while the fact is playing game all day get back to work already Honjou! ...Even me couldn't believe I could read the continuation of 'SILVER BULLET' after all these years...!"

"Wha... how nostalgic."

- While Shidou and Nakatsugawa got heated up in their discussion, Shiizaki shook her eyebrows a little then take a mobile phone out of her pocket. Shiizaki hang up the phone after a little talk and tell Shidou she got an urgent job and ask if he could bring one of the plastic bag to Kotori.

- Shidou nodded to her and take the plastic bag. Shiizaki bow back to Shidou and walk quickly in the hallway. Nakatsugawa also say goodbye to Shidou tell him he's going to finish 'SILVER BULLET' before his break ends and walk away in opposite direction of Shiizaki. Shidou go back to the direction he came from. When he open the door,

"Hey, Kotori. Shiizaki-san asked me to..."

- Said that, Shidou froze. Other than Kotori and Reine, there's another girl in the room. Kotori is pushing the girl down on the bed while breathing heavily. The hospital gown the girl is wearing is opening up violently.

"Kya! Kyaaaaaaaa!"

"You! Calm down already...! It's hard to uncloth you like this!"

"K-Kotori...?"

- Shidou stunned at the flower garden before his eyes. Kotori shake her shoulders when she noticed Shidou.

"S-Shidou!? Didn't you already go back!?"

"N-no, I was asked to bring this to you..."

- Shidou awkwardly avert his eyes away.

"How should I say... sorry. But I think forcibly doing it is a good thing..."

"I'm sure you misunderstood something!?"

- Kotori shrieked and returned the clothes of the girl to normal. Shidou widen his eyes seeing the girl in hospital gown.

"Mana!?"

"Eh...? Ah, Nii-sama!"

- The girl also raise her voice in surprise after hearing Shidou calling her name.

"Right. She have always been so reckless, and when I thought I'm going to do a detail inspection of her, she tried to resist like this."

"But well, Mana doesn't feel bad anywhere! I'm fine!"

"....."

- Kotori then stare at Mana. Mana make a wry smile with sweat on her forehead. Looking at their exchange, Shidou then remembered. Mana also helped Shidou when his spirit power went out of control and DEM tried to attack him.

"Right... you also helped me. Thank you, Mana."

"Nii-sama..."

- Heard Shidou said that, Mana then smiled and stood up.

"It's Mana and Nii-sama, don't be such a stranger!"

"Haha... that's right."

- Shidou scratch his cheek and laugh. Mana then suddenly turn her face to a serious look and stare at Shidou.

"More importantly, Nii-sama. I have something I want to ask when I met Nii-sama..."

"Hm? What's it?"

"What Nii-sama said back then —"

- Before Mana could finish her sentence, Kotori let out a small suppressed laugh and place her hand on Mana's shoulder.

"Maaaanaaaaa? Why are you getting away while talking with Shidou?"

"Eh!? U-um, I didn't meant to run away or something..."

- Kotori said to her in friendly and cold voice. Mana's face turn pale hearing that. Even though Shidou couldn't see Kotori's face from where he is standing, he could guess she is making a scary face right now. However, Kotori let out a sigh.

"—Don't misunderstand. I'm not angry or anything. Even this time, I don't know what would happened if you weren't there. I'm really grateful for your help."

"Kotori-san..."

- Mana take that as Kotori's pardon and loosen her stiffen expression a little bit. However, Kotori then put more strength into her hand that is placing on Mana's shoulder.

"So don't be so scared. About the fact that you went out without caring about your body, or about recklessly using Realizer, or the fact that you went uncontactable after, and yet exchange contact with Reine without me knowing, I'm not bothered by it even a liiiiiiiiitle bit."

"Hiiiiiiii!?"

- Kotori's fingers eat into Mana's shoulder. Mana shake her head left and right with her eyes brimmed with tears.

"H-Hey, Kotori... don't be so reckless, okay?"

- When Shidou said that, Kotori look back at him.

"Don't talk something absurd. I don't know anyone else doing something more reckless than you two siblings."

"Ug..."

"That..."

- Shidou and Mana couldn't continue their words. Kotori sigh at their reaction and look back at Mana.

"Anyway, I won't let you escape away this time. I'm going to inspect you to every minute detail, and do all the necessary treatment. Prepare yourself. I'm going to examine every part of you even something you don't know."

"Kyaa! Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaa!"

- Kotori said that and hold Mana's shoulder tight. Mana struggle and raise up a shriek.

"Nii-samaaaaaa! Heeeeelppppppp!"

"Well, you should get the inspection... let's talk later."

- Shidou then place the plastic bag nearby and leave the inspection room. He walk in the hallway for a while and get on an elevator, unlock about three levels of the security doors and he is arrived inside the multi-tenant building.

- The building and the shopping district are not very far away. Shidou walked about 10 minutes and is arrived at the row of houses he is familiar with. — However, the scenery of the shopping district is different from the one from few days ago.

- Even though it's one day after Christmas, the appearance of the shopping district changed from Western-style to Japanese-style in an instant. There is no more Santa Claus nor a deer, only a cake that didn't sell in the previous day sitting small on the shelf.

- Shidou look at the town that changed its appearance overnight and let out a small breath. Shidou didn't meant to complaint, rather, in a time like this, there usually is a cooking ingredient that normally not available, or even special sales. Just taking a look around is already fun for Shidou, let alone actually cooking with those ingredient.

- Shidou place his hand on his chin and think about today's menu. He did a little luxury dinner last night since it was a Christmas. And soon it will be New Year Eve and New Year.

- Even though <Ratatoskr> will pay for the Spirit's food expenses, having too much food is also not good for the body. Shidou decide to have a not-overly gorgeous menu for today. Even though it's still 14:30, the temperature today is not very high.

- 30 minutes later, Shidou finished buying all the ingredients and started walking back home. However, Shidou have to stop when he turned at the corner. There's a girl lying face down on the ground.

- Shidou shook his shoulder at sudden happening. He ran to the girl, leave the food bag on the ground and try to help her up. However, he then remembered that he shouldn't move someone who lie down to the ground. If the girl hit her head by a traffic accident, trying to move her might cause her condition to become worse.

- When Shidou don't know what to do, the girl moved her finger a little. She then unsteady lift her head. Shidou could see her face for the first time. The girl looked about one or two years older than Shidou. Judging from the dark rings under her eyes, rather than she was involved in a traffic accident, it looked like she collapsed from an extreme fatigue.

- Shidou saw the girl having conscious and try to help her up. The girl is only wearing a coat on top of roomwear with a pair of sandals without wearing socks. Seeing that, Shidou think she might be someone living nearby. Shidou also do something similar when he go to convenient store in the middle of the night.

- The girl then focus her eyes at Shidou's face. She then open her mouth in a small voice,

"—I'm —ng —y"

"Eh? What is it? What happened?"

- Shidou asked back. The girl then say it once again.

"...I'm hungry..."

"...Ha?"

- Shidou widen his eyes in surprise. A "guukyarurururu" sound is then heard from the girl's stomach.

- Few minutes later, Shidou is carrying the girl on his back. Even though the girl has conscious, she said she's too hungry and cannot move. Shidou then

decided to help bringing her to her house. The girl say to Shidou in a voice without vigor,

"...N... I'm sorry, boy..."

"It's fine... but are you really okay? Shouldn't you go to a hospital?"

"Ah, fine fine. It's not that I'm ill or anything. Moreover, I can't waste my time on that." The girl said that and wave her hand, "Anyway, can you stop with that humble speech, I'm not very used to being so formal."

"Ah... is that it."

"Ahh, see, you still using it."

"U-um, o-okay."

- Shidou sweat on his cheek at the girl's careless attitude. You could say she's bold unlike her fragile looks. Or rather, seeing a girl collapsed on the street because of hunger in a satiation country like Japan is not normal in itself. Shidou still haven't asked her the situation since he was surprised at the unfamiliar scene.

"Ah, please bring me to that mansion"

- Thinking to that, the girl on his back then raise her hand and point to front of him. Shidou look into the direction the girl is pointing and widen his eyes. The mansion is an high-rise mansion taller than all other building around it.

"Eh? Here?"

"Nn, right. ...Ah, or maybe a worn-down apartment suits me better?"

"U-um, not really..."

- Shidou don't know what to say for a moment. Her guess was right.

Usually the higher the mansion is, the higher the cost. Shidou can't associate the looks of the girl with the mansion in front of him.

"Ehehe, it's okay. How to say it? You know, a gap? Don't you turned on by it? As a boy"

"...Er, um, I don't know."

- Shidou knitted his eyebrows. He couldn't quite grasp the girl's personality.

"— Ah, boy, can I ask you to bring me to my room? For some reason my legs can't move. I guess limbs do degenerate if you don't use it for too long?"

"Haa... that's fine... but are you sure you don't need to go to hospital?"

- Shidou don't have any urgent business. It's also better than letting the girl alone and found her dead by roadside later. Even though such a manga situation couldn't easily happened in real life... at very least this girl did collapsed out of hunger before.

- Shidou then walk into the mansion's entrance with the girl on his back and stopped in front of the auto-lock door. However, the person who could type in the unlock code must input it from Shidou's back. Security-wise, this is not a very commendable thing. However, Shidou have no other choice,

"I'll close my eyes, so please input the unlock code —"

"Ah, room number is 1801. Password is 1234."

"Security!?"

- Shidou let out a weird voice at the girl's words.

"Eh? What was that shout? Very amusing. Do it again do it again."

"No, not that! You shouldn't tell me the unlock code!"

"Eh? Why?"

"That's not good for security, isn't it!? If someone else other than the residence know the password, then he can come in and out freely! We just met for the first time, and I'm a boy you know!"

- Heard that, the girl then cover her mouth with her hand and let out a "Ma!" then continue,

"Boy will do that? Aw, that's unexpected."

"I will not! But as a generalization!"

"...Ah, I see. So you're carnivore even though you looked like a herbivore... I see, this is successful trope of gap. I'm a bit wiser now."

"Are you even listening!?"

"Yes, I am, I am. I super am. ...For a reference, lemme ask one thing, if you break into a girl's room, what is the first thing you would do?"

"You aren't listening!?"

- Shidou shouted. He then notice someone is staring at him. Shidou froze when he looked at the direction. The caretaker of the mansion... or rather, the mansion's concierge is staring at him with his hand on a phone, as if he is preparing to call a police. Shidou make a polite smile and enter the unlock code to the panel and enter the mansion.

"...I'm going in."

"Sir yes sir~"

- The girl replied in a carefree tone. Shidou then walk in the hallway, to the elevator, and to the room.

"...Ok, here it is. Is this the place?"

"Nn, thanks. But if you leave me like this, I'd be dead by the entrance."

"...Haa. Then give me the key. I'll open."

"You got it. Ah, the key is in my butt pocket, please take it gent~ly."

"Why did you put it there!?"

- The girl then tangle her hands to Shidou's neck,

"Don't ask something so flimsy. It's supposed to be a thank that you helped me when you found me on the street. Just accept it as a perk. If you mistakenly put your hand inside my clothes, I'm okay up to above my pantsu."

"What are you saying!?"

"Nn? Well~ you know~. I want to thank you at very least, so I 'pushed' mine toward your back all the time. But since you didn't made any reaction, so I thought, oh? Maybe this guy has a butt fetish?"

"What's with that vulgar concern!?"

"Ah, don't tell me boy worship huge breasts? You don't count anything below 80cm as breasts? I'm sorry in that case. I can't really do anything about that~"

"Can you not put me in some random faction!?"

- Shidou shout and make a large sigh.

"Anyway, just lend me the key. Otherwise I'm going to leave you here."

"Aw, I guess I have no choice."

- The girl then put her hand in her butt pocket.

"Ah... h... out of sudden... ya... a..."

"Can you please not make a weird voice on my back..."

"Aw, you're really cold."

- The girl then make a pouty lips and lend Shidou the key. Shidou open the door and walk into the room.

"Excuse me"

"I excuse you~"

"....."

"Eh, not even a Tsukkomi anymore!?"

- Shidou ignore the girl's voice and enter the room. From the entrance, a long hallway could be seen together with a magazine and a stack of manga book. Shidou asked the girl where is her bedroom and followed her direction.

- The girl's room is also full of manga books. Even though every side of the wall in her room is already a bookshelf, the amount of books in the room could not even fit them. Her bed is even worse, there is only space for a person to sleep. The books are scattering around that space.

- Once Shidou stand in front of her bed, the girl then come down from his back like a slime getting poured into a table, into the space on her bed like a puzzle piece.

"Nn, this is very relaxing."

"Haa..."

- Shidou breath a sigh and then looked around the room and noticed something. Shidou walk to the back of the room at the thing he found. Even though it's not very commendable to look around in other's room —

especially for a girl who he just met — but Shidou couldn't resist his curiosity.

- At the back of the room, there is a large working table. The table is full of drawing materials. A big light is placed in a position that it could light up the whole table. A thick B4 paper is placed in the middle of the table.

- Even though this is Shidou's first time seeing it, he could tell the paper is a manuscript of a manga. The inking has already finished, what's left is to remove the pencil traces. Shidou then ask back to the girl if she is drawing a manga.

- The girl who is lying on a bed like a corpse raise up her hand and explain that she is a pro mangaka. She were being too concentrate with her work and forgot to eat. When she decided to go to nearby convenient store and go outside, she learned that Earth's gravity is stronger than expected.

- The girl then dropped her hand onto the bed. Shidou ask if she do not have any assistant since she is a pro. The girl said a pro normally have one, but she like to do everything by herself. Although the demerit of doing so is that sometimes she almost die because of it.

- Shidou scratch his cheek and point out that the demerit is pretty critical. He then take a look at the manuscript on the table. Even though Shidou is not manga mania or anything, he read manga like any other high school student. Seeing a raw manuscript for the first time is a pretty exciting experience.

- Shidou guess she is writing a shonen manga from the art style. He then noticed something and bend his body toward the manuscript and closely look at it. Since the manuscript still isn't done, he couldn't tell in an instant, but Shidou is sure he have seen it somewhere before.

"...Don't tell me, 'SILVER BULLET'!?"

- Shidou raise up his voice. The manuscript on the table is from the manga Shidou were talking with Nakatsugawa earlier, 'SILVER BULLET'.

"Oh? You knew it? Could you possibly be my reader? Thank you~"

- The girl then wave her hand to Shidou. But more importantly, there is one thing on Shidou's mind. Shidou turned his body toward her and ask,

"Wait a minute. Don't tell me, you are Honjou Souji...?"

"Nn, yes I am~"

"Souji is not a man!?"

"Ah, that's just a pen name. Pen name, you see. My real name is Nia. Honjou Nia. Nice to meet you~"

- Said that, Nia then smile and continue.

"There are quite number of female writer doing that when writing shonen manga. See, Takajou-san of 'Other Fake' is also a woman."

"Eh!? R-really!?"

- Shidou widen his eyes at unexpected information. He then realized something even more strange,

"Wait, wait, wait... that's still strange. 'SILVER BULLET' has been running since I was in an elementary school. Honjou Souji's debut work is even older than that..."

- Shidou then look at Nia once again. Judging from outer appearance, Nia looks like a 18 or 19 years old. Even if she looked younger than her actual age, beginning of twenties is the maximum.

- Shidou think it is also possible that Nia is Honjou Souji's daughter who share the same art style and continue using Honjou Souji's name as a second generation. Nia noticed that and shrugged.

"I'm sorry to tell you Honjou Souji has always been me since the start. It's about 10 years since I debut, by the way."

"10 years..."

- Shidou make a dubious looks at what Nia just said. He thought that if everything is a lie, then it's more believable. However, the manuscript on the table is no doubt Honjou Souji, and if this manuscript getting printed in 'Blast' in the later issues, then that would be a proof for authenticity of the girl's manuscript. Seeing Shidou's reaction, the girl then make a sigh.

"Uun... the order is a little different than what I _assumed_, but oh well. — Let me tell you my secret."

"Eh...?"

- Shidou shake his shoulder at Nia's words. Even though it's something that stuck in Shidou's head, he wasn't so sure it is something that she should reveal to an outside like Shidou.

"Actually, I —"

- However, the next moment. A Guuu~ Kyarururururu~ sound is heard from Nia's stomach louder than the last time. Since she was about to go into serious tone, the scene just now was pretty surreal.

"B-boy..."

- Nia called Shidou in a weaken voice. Shidou let out a sigh and scratch his head,

"Okay, okay. Let me borrow your kitchen."

"Kay..."

"...Let me confirm one thing. You can eat normal food, right? Say, you don't need to suck blood to keep your young looks, correct?"

"Eh? You'll let me suck your blood?"

- Said that, Nia go "Gah!" then crook her fingers and show her teeth. Shidou saw her reaction and sure she must be fine. He then walk to the kitchen. Shidou initially expected the sink in the kitchen to be full of unwashed dishes, but the sink is clean and organized.

- Shidou admire how tidy the kitchen is for a second before he notice how dusty the kitchenware is. It looks like Nia did not tidy up the kitchen, but rather never really used it. It is likely that she always buy a bento from supermarket or always eat outside.

- After Shidou finished tidy up the kitchen, he take a look at the fridge to find something he could use for cooking. However, the fridge is full of beer can. Shidou check in the crisper drawer, but there is only Sake bottles inside.

"....."

- Shidou closed the fridge and returned to the entrance. He pick up some ingredient from his plastic bag and return to the kitchen. Even though these ingredient are meant to be used for Spirit's dinner, it should be fine since he bought a lot more than usual. Beside, he can't let this Nia girl starve to death.

- Shidou wash his hands and start considering about what to make. Compared to the stencils in the room, there is not much kitchenware he could use. He also can't let Nia wait too long for the food either.

- Shidou then start making a Zosui. It could be made relatively easy and should be good for the stomach. Shidou finished cooking and bring it to Nia's bedroom. Shidou place the bowl beside Nia's bed and warn her that the food is hot. Nia claps her hand and start eating.

"Hoaccha!"

"I already warned you..."

"Fuu... fuu..."

- Learn that, Nia blow the spoon to cool it down before eating. Nia gulped down a Zosui and let out a "AAhhhhhhh..." voice like an old man in a hot spring. Tears then start coming out from her eyes.

"Delicious... what you just let me eat...*"

[*This line is from Japanese image macro: なんちゅうもんを食わせてくれたんや]

- It take less than 5 minutes for her to finish. Nia thanked Shidou for the food and tell him it has been a week since she eat a warm food. Shidou make a wry smile and take her bowl. But before he leave the room,

"Ah, wait a minute"

"Don't tell me you want more? In that case I'm sorry, the ingredient I used to made this was for my dinner's. If you want more you should order a delivery."

"Ah, not that. That's not what I meant."

- Nia shook her head and point her finger to the manuscript on the desk.

"As I said earlier, I don't have any assistant. So can you help me with it? Even a simple task is fine. Please! I'm going to add extra for the pay!"

"...Eh?"

- Shidou widen his eyes at the unexpected request.

"N-no, no, no, no. What are you talking about? I can't do that."

"Eh~. It should be fine~. Or do you have any business?"

"No, not that... it's just I never touched a pro's manuscript before. I can't take any responsibility if I made any mistakes."

"It's fine, it's fine. Just only erasing the pencil trace. It required quite some stamina you know."

"Even if you said so..."

"Please please please! I have too many things to do right now. If I leave it like this, I can't definitely finish the next manuscript on time..."

"...Haa. Fine, but only for simple tasks, okay?"

- Nia make a gladful smile and laugh at Shidou.

"Sure thing sure thing. Well then, let's go to the work room. Here is too small for two to work."

"Work room... you have other room for working?"

"Of course. It's now like this because I want to be able to collapse down right away if I'm going to die while working, but I actually have other room for work!"

"You said like that's a normal thing. It's not!"

- Nia then bring Shidou to the work room. Shidou widen his eyes once he entered the room. In the middle of the room, there is a large table with lots of drawing material on it. All sides of the room are full of bookshelves like

Nia's bedroom, the difference is that drawing reference are lined up inside those shelves.

"Well, use the table over there."

"Eh, are you sure? This place feels like a craftman's sacred ground..."

"It's okay, okay! Ah, or do you like the desk in my room better? So you want to work while breathing an air of my body scent?"

"I like here better."

- Nia make a pouty lips when Shidou said that. Shidou then confirm with Nia that he only need to do Gomu-kake (erasing). Nia say yes to him and wear her glasses then point him to the pile of paper she already finished inking.

"Once you finished earsing the lines, paint the area with an X mark with black ink please."

"N...?"

- Shidou incline his head at Nia's words.

"W-wait a minute! Didn't you want me to do only Gomu-kake!? Even if it's Beta-nuri, you shouldn't let an amateur do it!"

"It's fine, fine. If you're dexterous enough you can do it. Feel free to use anything as long as you can paint it black. The trick is to paint small corners with fine tip pen first, then do the larger part with something quick."

"Wait, did you even listened to what I said!?"

"Sure I did~. I'm sure you can do it. Boy, you have used drawing material before, right?"

"What...? W-what do you mean, out of sudden..."

- Shidou turned perplexed at Nia's words. Nia lift up the tip of her mouth and continue,

"Boy, do you know? Someone who doesn't know anything about manga wouldn't call erasing as 'Gomu-kake' or call a black ink as 'Beta'?"

".....!"

"Lemme guess. You used to draw an illustration for your own original character when you were in elementary school, right? Well, I can understand that. I can definitely understand that. At first you drew in a notebook using a pencil, but once you found manga tools in stationery store, you thought you could try."

"!? N-no, I..."

"After that you started thinking about screen tones, but then you saw that the price is so high even though it could be used only once."

"Gu... gu..."

"And you learn that there's a way to draw on a PC and thought you no longer have to worry about buying tools! But then you see the price of the painting software and pen tablet."

"Ahhhhhhhhh...!"

"And..."

"...Okay, I give up. Don't say anything anymore. Please."

"Well then I'll leave it to you, boy. I have my work over there."

- When Shidou said to her in a complaining tone, Nia laugh then make a thumbs-up to him and walk back to her bedroom. Shidou let out a sigh and sit on the chair then start erasing pencil lines. After that, Shidou pick a pen on the desk and start painting black as instructed.

- Even though the task is very simple, Shidou feel strain from the fact this is a pro's manuscript, from the pressure that he have to be careful to not make it dirty. After a while, when Shidou finished painting all the manuscript, Nia come in to the room once again.

"Oh, already done? Ooh, you're good at this."

"...Right, I managed it somehow. It has been a while since I have to do something this delicate."

- Shidou turn his shoulder. When he raise up his face, he then startled at Nia's looks. Nia has changed her clothes from a roomwear into a maid uniform with lots of exposure. Shidou gulp down his saliva.

"W-What's with that clothings..."

"Eh? Ah, this? I bought it for a reference a long time ago. So I thought I'd give you some service and cheer you up. Remember, I did said I'll add extra for the pay? How about it? Even though my breasts is not so big, my figure is pretty good right?"

"I don't think that's what extra meant!?"

"Joking, joking. This is just a service. Here is your pay."

- Nia was going to pass Shidou an envelope, but she remembered something. Nia make an evil smile and then put the envelope between her breasts.

"Well, boy. Here—it—is."

"W-What are you doing!?"

"It's okay, it's okay. Just take it."

- Nia then hunch up her shoulder in order to emphasis her breasts. However, the envelop then slipped between her breasts onto the floor.

"....."

"Ah..."

- Shidou let out a small voice. Nia then collapse to the floor out of shock.



"Ku... is small breasts really a sin...!?"

"...Um, I'm going back now."

- Shidou sweat on his cheek and start packing his belongings. He feel he won't be able to go back if he continues.

"Eh? What about the pay?"

"It's okay. It was a valuable experience for me."

"Ehh. I can't let you do that~. Just get this and buy something good to eat."

"In Nia case please buy something to eat regardless of good or not."

- Shidou lowered his eyelid and said. Nia widen her eyes in surprise.

"Aw, I didn't see that one coming."

"I didn't meant to... anyway, good bye. Don't collapse down by the roadside again."

- Shidou then wave his hand at her and try to leave the room. However Nia then pull Shidou's cloth.

"W-wait wait, wait. Wait a minute! I can't be convinced just for that."

"Even if you said so..."

- When Shidou is at loss, Nia thought up of something and clap her hands.

"Ah, how about this. Boy, are you free this Saturday?"

"Hm...? What's it, all of sudden"

"I'll have a day off once I finished my manuscript. I'll let you date me. Ah, of course I'll pay for everything."

"Eh...?"

- Shidou widen his eyes at Nia's offer.

"Ah, but in exchange, let me specify the place to go. I haven't bought anything for a while, so I want to go to Akiba."

"...Are you sure you didn't want me as a your baggage carrier...?"

"Giku!?"

- Nia make an over-the-top surprising reaction. Shidou ever heard someone say "Giku" for the first time.

"Haa... I'm sorry, but can you ask someone else? What about asking your friends?"

"....."

- When Shidou said that, Nia's expression become cloudy for a moment. But she quickly returned to her usual tone and scratch her head.

"Well... haha. I don't have any friends."

- Nia lower her eyelids.

"—But are you really okay like that?"

"Eh?"

- Shidou knit his eyebrows at the implications in her words. Seeing that, Nia then lift up the tip of her mouth and continue,

"—Isn't it your job to make Spirits go dere for you, boy?

No... Itsuka Shidou-kun?"

"Ha...?"

- Shidou couldn't understand what Nia just said in an instant and let out a foolish voice.

Chapter 2 - Akiba, I have returned!

- Knox and Burton are standing in a room shivering in fear. Their body is full of bandage and plaster. In front of them, Isaac Westcott is reading a document in his hand. Just only a little reaction from Westcott is enough to make sweat start pouring out of their face.

"...Knox-san, what will happen to us..."

"...Sh! Keep quiet"

- Burton called Knox in a small voice. Knox replied back to him in a small voice without averting his eyes away from Westcott. Burton decide to keep quiet per Knox's suggestion.

- Knox could fully understand what Burton is worrying about. However, he thought a chit-chat in a place like this will only worsen the situation. What they should do right now is to keep quiet like a stone.

- Knox and Burton were being called to Westcott's office because of the accident few days ago. While transporting a 'Material A' from Neril Island in Pacific Ocean, they were attacked by something and let 'Material A' escaped.

- Even though Knox did not let the spirit escaped on purpose, and that happening was purely an accident, they can't help but feel uneasy given how attached Westcott is to the spirit. Westcott could make them ending up in the street just for a whim.

- Or rather, just only ending up in the streets could be considered kindness by Westcott's standard. Given Ellen Mathers is standing next to Westcott, only a word of order can easily remove Knox and Burton's head from their neck.

"—I see"

- Westcott returned his eyes from the document and look at Knox and Burton. Knox and Burton frown. However Westcott do not care about their reaction and throw the report on the table. He then walk to Knox and Burton.

- Seeing Westcott coming in front of them, Knox and Burton think of the possibility of what might come from Westcott's mouth next. It may be a punishment, or a lay off, or worst, an order to Ellen to get rid of them. Knox close his eyes while biting his inner teeth.

"Thank you for your trouble. Your wound should recover quickly using Realizer. Come back to work once you have enough rest."

"...Huh?"

"O-only that...?"

- Knox and Burton both surprised at the words coming out of Westcott's mouth. They looked at each other and let out a dumb voice. Seeing their reaction, Westcott only make a wondering face unable to understand what they were expecting. Few moments, he then realized,

"Ah, I see. Sure thing, you both will receive compensation —"

"No, that's not what I meant...!"

- Knox couldn't keep quiet at Westcott's words.

"We let 'Material A' escaped, don't you going to punish us...?"

"Hm? But judging from the report, the accident wasn't your fault. Rather, I have high evaluation for your decision when <Nightmare> attacked. Don't you think it's stupid to lose a good staff because of personal reason?"

"I-Is that so..."

"I planned to release 'Material A' since the beginning. Beside, it's better to let her free for now. Thanks to you, I don't have to setup the stage."

"Huh...?"

- Knox widen his eyes at Westcott's unexpected words. He couldn't understand why Westcott would bring 'Material A' to Japan just to let it free.

"Director, what are you going to —"

- Before Knox could finished his words, he feel something is pulling his clothes. When he look into that direction, Burton who turned his face pale is shaking his head left and right. Knox then realize he was going to stick his nose into something unnecessary.

"I see. Then if you don't mind we're leaving..."

"Sure."

- Westcott replied to them in a friendly tone. Knox and Burton then leave the room. While leaving, Knox was scared that Westcott might call him to stop. However, nothing happened. After they walk some distance from the room, Knox and Burton let out their breath like they couldn't breath up until now.

- Burton ask Knox back about what happened earlier while wiping a sweat in his face with his sleeve. Knox do the same and reply to him,

"...I don't know. I'm sure his brain has different structure from us. It's useless to try to understand. Rather —"

"Rather?"

"...No, nothing."

- Knox smooth over Burton's question. They're still inside DEM Industry's office building. Knox can't be sure that his conversation won't be heard by someone. There is no way he could say he — don't think "that" is a human being like himself. Or rather, that man probably do not consider himself to be the same being as Knox and Burton.

- Knox shivers when he remembered Westcott's eyes that looked like he is staring at a reptiles or an insect. He call Burton's name and walk down the hallway, while thinking of a candidate for his new workplace.



"What you just said—"

- Shidou make a dubious face and stare at the girl in front of him. Honjou Nia. The girl who used a pen name Honjou Souji as a mangaka. It's not that Shidou couldn't understand what she just said. Rather, he is perplexing because he couldn't believe what she just said.

- "Spirits" — the existence that were supposed to be a secret. Not only that, she also know about Shidou's name and Shidou's objective.

"Nia... how did you know...?"

"Fufun?"

- Shidou make a wary look and asked. Heard that, Nia then remove her glasses and listlessly brush her hair up.

"Well? I wonder how. How mysterious?"

"D-Don't dodge the question! Who are you!"

"Don't be so angry. I'll tell you."

- Shidou rise up his voice. Nia wave her hand and reply to him in a casual tone. She then call its name,

"<Heavenly Raiment — Yod>"

"What...!?"

- Shidou choked. The light started gathering around Nia's body. Shidou let out a voice in wonder while narrowing his eyes. "Astral Dress!?" he shouted. Not before long, the light calm down. Nia in front of him changed from the maid uniform from earlier into a sister dress made of light fabric.

"So, you understand now?"

"Nia... so you're a spirit?"

"Right. — Well, if you know something else that could do this, I'd rather be that."

- Nia make a bold smile. She replied to Shidou and laugh. However, when she see no reaction from Shidou who is still astonished and shuddered at what happened, she put her hand on her hip and bend her lips in dissatisfaction.

"What's with that reaction? Now I just look stupid with all the tease."

"...Eh?"

- Shidou scratch his cheek at Nia's casual tone that is not different from earlier. He feel all the air of tension in the room is being disperse away.

"I mean, I expected you to go 'N-Nandatte!?' or something like that. Or maybe you go Doki! at the girl who transform out of sudden unlike any previous pattern you've encountered. Also also, don't you think this Astral Dress is pretty lewd? Look at the slit here at the joint of my legs. The whole

dress is also made of mysterious transparent fabric that let you see my figure."

- Nia lift up her leg onto a chair. Shidou's face went red when he seen her white thigh through the slit of her dress. Shidou avert his eyes away from her.

".....!"

"Oh! That, that! That reaction! Ehehehe, good good, boy. So you have legs fetish? I see~. You're still young, it's okay if you're a little more greedy."

- Nia move her fingers like she is working up Shidou's passion. Even though her dress looked like that of a chaste sister, the actual person wearing it is a complete opposite.

"...Ah darn."

- Shidou scratch his head out of frustration and look back to Nia.

"Don't play around. I'm still confused at the situation. ...I understand that Nia is a spirit. But how did you know about me? That I — um, persuade the spirits."

"Ah, about that?"

- Heard that, Nia move her legs down from the chair. Nia then bring her hand in front of her.

"Even though I don't like spoilers because of my profession, but anyway, let me tell you as an exception."

- Nia then move her mouth to call the name.

"<Tome of Telling — Rasiel>"

- The next moment, a book appears in Nia's hand. The large sacred book is covered with a material that is not both leather nor a metal. On top of it is a cross like in her Astral Dress.



"That is... an angel!?"

"Right. This is my <Rasiel>. — An omniscient angel that know everything in this world."

"What..."

- Shidou knitted his eyebrows hearing Nia's words.

"Omniscient...? What do you mean?"

"Even if you ask me.... It's exactly as it means. <Rasiel> can tell me everything. Like something that is happening somewhere in this world, or who is doing something. For example — like that time you finished shopping and were walking into that street."

"What—"

- Shidou shuddered at her words. Seeing that, Nia then giggled.

"— Don't tell me you really think everything is just a coincidence? That you found a girl collapsing on the street by accident, and when you helped her, turned out she is a spirit. No, there's no way that is possible. If it was me, I definitely won't make that a prologue to the story."

"...So in short, you knew I'm going to help you, that's why you collapsed there?"

"Well, something like that."

- Nia nodded exaggeratedly and answered. Shidou purred out of nervousness.

"...Then the fact that you let me help you with the manuscript also has some meaning —"

"Ah, I just want you to help on that one."

"So just helping!?"

- Shidou scream. Rather, if there were any implication in doing so, that would be pretty scary story in itself. But if she say there's no implication, then it's still kinda bother him. However, that doesn't change the fact that Nia invite him to her room while knowing everything since the start. Shidou shake his head to clear his mind.

"So — Nia, what's your objective? Why did you... invited me here?"

"Don't be so on guard. It's not exactly like I have any business with you. If I were to mention one, I just wanted to see Boy with my own eyes. Even though I know about you from <Rasiel>, but that's only information about you. Nothing beats seeing the real one."

- Nia answered in a relaxed tone, completely opposite that of Shidou's. Nia then touch the cover of her <Rasiel> that is floating in the air and continue,

"Other than that — well, I guess I also want to thank you."

"Thank me...?"

- Shidou knitted his eyebrows. Even though it's true that Shidou help Nia who collapsed on the street, but that was all Nia's plans. Noticing Shidou's reaction, Nia then shake her head left and right.

"Ah, no no. That's not what I meant. — For when you helped me at the beginning of this month."

"Eh?"

- Shidou have no idea what Nia is talking about. This is the first time he met her. The beginning of this month was when his Path with other spirits narrowed down. Rather, it was when everyone helped Shidou.

"Eh, you couldn't remembered? Remember, when you respond to my calling and shot that transport plane down for me. I could escaped thanks to that."

"Calling... ah—"

- Shidou then shake his shoulder. Shidou's memory of that time was vague, but he remembered he released his spirit power because someone was calling him.

"So that was you...? But that plane..."

"I was being transported by that plane. — By DEM Industry's plane."

"...! DEM"

- Shidou make a severe look when he heard that word.

"But why was Nia in DEM's transport plane...?"

"Nn? Well, because I was being captured by them. They kept me in underground facility so long. Thanks to that my body is all stiffen. I also have to halt my serialization for so long because of that. It was the worst."

- Nia answered in a carefree tone while putting her hand inside her cap to scratch her head. Thanks to the tone of her, Shidou almost ignored what she just said. Shidou widen his eyes when he realized the meaning of her words.

"Captured!? By DEM—!?"

"Right. I think it was 5 years ago? Er, what's her name again, that sickly girl."

- Nia said that and touch the cover of <Rasiel>. <Rasiel> shake a little before releasing a pale light and flipping its page on its own. Nia take a look at the page and clap her hands.

"—Ah, right. Ellen. Ellen Mira Mathers. I was beaten by her. I can't really do anything back then. She were secretly waiting to ambush and sudden went DON! at me."

"Ellen..." Shidou make an even more severe looks hearing the name. "B-But are you okay...?"

"Un~, to be honest I can't really remembered. They were connecting me to some sort of machines and was really fed up. — Ah, no. Let me change my words. There's one thing really harsh they did to me. They didn't let me write any manga. My drawing sense would definitely become dull if I didn't draw something that long. How could they compensate if the sales dropped?"

- Nia said so and fold her arms out of irritation. Even though she said that, Shidou thought her treatment could be considered pretty gentle coming from DEM. However, Shidou have one thing stuck in his mind. He look back at Nia and ask,

"But since your angel is all-knowing, how did you not knew the ambush..."

"Ah, no no. It's not that."

"Not that..."

"Even though <Rasiel> is omniscient, it could only give me the information I wanted. It's not that I could see into the future, nor it could automatically detect any danger coming to me either. — In summary, I can't escape something that I don't know. Let's say it's just a super powerful search engine."

"I... see. I thought the ability was powerful... but looks like there's also some restriction."

- Heard that, Nia then narrowed her eyes in half and let out a "Fuun?" voice.

"You dare to say that, Boy. Looks like you still don't know the power of <Rasiel>."

"Eh...?"

"Everything written in <Rasiel> is a fact. On the flip side, that means —"

- Nia laugh audaciously and pull a decoration on her cape with her fingers. The tip of that decoration is in a shape of a pen. Nia take that pen and start writing something into <Rasiel> that is floating in the air.

"....."

"....."

"....."

"...Um, what are you doing."

"Wait a minute. I'm almost done."

- Nia said in a serious looks and continue writing something in her angel. Few minutes later,

"—Well, I guess this is it."

- Nia raise up her face and return the pen to where she took it from. Nia then tapped on <Rasiel>, <Rasiel> then release a faint light.

"W-what?"

"You'll know soon. Very very soon."

"Eh? Er... uwa!?"

- Shidou screamed. Suddenly, Shidou's body started moving on its own.

"W-what is this!?"

"Ah, yes, yes. Here, here."

- Nia then lie down with her face down. Shidou's body then mount on her back on its own and start massaging Nia's waist.

"Ahh... right there, right there. This is good"

"W-wait, what is this...!?"

- While Shidou is still perplexing at what is happening, his hand suddenly start wriggling and start rubbing Nia's butt.

"Kyan! Boy's so pervert!"

"N-no, this is not my doing—!?"

- Shidou raise up his voice. That is when Shidou could move his body once again. Shidou quickly step away from where he was and start breathing heavily. Noticing Shidou, Nia stand up and giggle.

"Well, you get the idea."

- Nia then tap on the cover of <Rasiel> once again and show Shidou the page she just wrote. In that page, it is a manga with character like Shidou and Nia describing what they have done just now.

"T-This is..."

"Future describing. As I said, everything written in <Rasiel> is a fact — even though it is something being newly written into it."

"...!? Seriously...!?"

- Shidou let out a voice of astonishment. That means the future is something within Nia's control. It's beyond just terrifying — the power is nearly resembles that of the god's. However, there is one thing stuck in Shidou's mind.

"...But why manga? Isn't it faster to write a text?"

"Nn, if I don't do this, it's hard for me to get the feeling of it. But if I have to spend that much time to describe only few seconds of an event, I'd rather use that free time to work. The power is not that convenient, see."

"...Um"

- Shidou sweat on his cheek. Even though the power is powerful enough to bend the will of this world... for some reason Shidou doesn't feel the power is that much of an issue in Nia's hands. Noticing Shidou's face, Nia then make a dissatisfaction looks once again.

"Ah. You're making a face like you're underestimating me again. If Boy is going to take that attitude, then let me show you one more thing. How scary it is to know everything that already happened in this world."

"Eh...?"

- Shidou frown at Nia's words. Nia then touch the cover of <Rasiel> once again and open its page. She look at the page and put her hand on her chin.

"Fumufumu... I see. Instant Lighting Blast? That's pretty cool."

"Fuga!?"

- Shidou screamed out of unexpected words from Nia's mouth. Nia continue to read the page while giggling.

"Ah, I found your original character. The Black-Clothed Fighter Lieven, eh? Ah, I agree. Black is cool don't you think. Ah, but if you're going to create a story with him as a main character, I'd suggest to give him some weak point that the reader could sympathize with and to add tension to the story. Also I think it may be because of your age that you may feel ashamed writing a girl's character, but you should give more thought into main girl's settings. Since her character will directly associate with the sales."

"Pleeeeeease stop giving advice from pro's viewpoint!?"

- Shidou hold his head with his hands while bending his body. He feel like someone is hollowing out his stomach. Shidou writhe in pain for few moments on the floor and stand up while breathing heavily. Nia then look at him with a triumphant smile.

"How was it? You understand how scary <Rasiel> is now?"

"...Yes. Very very much. I'm sorry that I misunderestimating it."

- Shidou bow down to her and say sorry. Nia nodded in satisfaction.

"Good. — Well anyway, for me it's as I said. Thank to you, I can escape from that place and resume my serialization. I'm really grateful for that."

- Nia look at Shidou and continue,

"— But from your side, you probably can't just accept a thank you and then say goodbye. <Ratatoskr>... was it? Saving the world by making Spirits Dere is such a amusing idea. So you'll have to persuade me too, right?"

"About that..."

- Shidou think to himself that it will be the case. Even though Nia seems to already adapted to the society, it's still unknown when will she cause a Space Quake. Shidou want her to be under protection of <Ratatoskr>.

- Also considering she has been captured by DEM once, there's no guarantee that she won't be captured again. Leaving her alone like this is too dangerous. Noticing Shidou's looks, Nia then nodded to him.

"All is well, all is well. Isn't it looks interesting? Don't you think a secret society is also very exciting? — Also as I said earlier, I'm very grateful to you. So I think I'll give you a chance as a thank you."

"A chance — ah..."

- Shidou widen his eyes. He then remembered what Nia said earlier, that she will have a day off once she finished the manuscript.

"But the location is Akiba. I'm not budge on this one. Since I'm locked out for 5 years, my body needs 2D. The withdrawal is really bad. I'm shivering to read the contiuation of this and that book and new series from this and that author."

- Nia hold her shoulders and start shaking.

"And I have another work waiting for me once I finished. I'll also be busy with Comico at the end of year. I won't able to find any time for a while. So you have my regards. I'm more or less pretty popular you know."

"C-Comico?"

"Comic Colosseum. You could say a doujinshi event. I thought I have to skip this year since I don't have a booth, but I'm able to rent a booth from someone who can't participate due to sudden illness. I still have the manuscript from before I was caught by DEM. Well, it sure has been a while since I participate Comico~."

- Nia fold her hands and nod to herself. She then noticed Shidou is being left behind in the topic and look back at him.

"Ah, sorry, sorry. Well in summary, this is what I meant."

- Nia then point to herself with her thumb.

"— I'll give you a chance. If you could make me Dere, then do it."

- Said that, Nia then lift up the tips of her lips. Shidou gulped down his saliva at her words full of self-confidence.

".....!"

"Don't worry, I won't peek into your strategy meeting or anything. I don't like spoiling something so someone, and also hate being spoiled. Please think up a plan with — er"

- <Rasiel>'s page then flipped following Nia's eyes movement.

"Ah, right. Kotori-chan. Being commander at 14 sure is amazing. So please think up a plan without any worry with your sister. — But even if I do say so, it's really hard to make me Dere, you know? Make sure to prepare yourself."

- Nia laugh ahaha and wave her hand at Shidou.

"— Anyway, I guess that's it for today. I also have to finish my manuscript. And doesn't Boy also have to make dinner for everyone?"

"Right — Nia"

"Well, if you want to ask me anything, let's do it on that date. I'll send you the location and the time later. — Ah, your mail address, do you mind if I check it on my own?"

"S-sure, I don't mind."

"Okay~. Thank you. See you later. I'm looking forward to it."

- When everything is decided before Shidou could follow the discussion, Nia say goodbye and send him out from her room.



"— The spirit that was captured by DEM?"

- After Shidou back at home, he call Kotori who was still in the underground facility. Hearing his story, Kotori quickly come back home. Kotori couldn't believe what Shidou was saying — that there is a spirit who have been working as mangaka since several years ago.

- However, Kotori couldn't deny the possibility because there is Miku as a similar case. While Shidou and Kotori are talking, Tohka call them from behind.

"Mu...? Shido, what are you talking with Kotori?"

"Ah, Tohka. Well... about work."

"Ooh, I see. Sorry for disturbing."

- Tohka bow down to them and said so. After that, another voice is heard from the living room,

"— Shidou, my entrails desire for an offering. Quickly sacrifice me something."

"Translation. Kaguya was saying 'I'm hungry. I want to eat Shidou's delicious meal nyan.'"

"Can you not add some weird suffix to my word!?"

- Kaguya and Yuzuru exchange banter while leaning themselves from the sofa.

"Ahh, sorry. It'll be done very soon."

- Shidou make a wry smile and flip the salt grilled mackerel. Shidou were talking about the spirit with Kotori while cooking. If someone were to look from outside, nobody would thought they're talking about the topic that influence the fate of this world.

- When the food is almost ready, Shidou raise up his voice telling spirits in the living room to clean up the table. Yoshino, Natsumi and Tohka who were talking to each other then joins Kaguya and Yuzuru and begin preparing the table.

"...But nevertheless, an omniscient angel <Rasiel>, huh.... Not just being able to know everything she want to know, but also able to write the future. What a terrifying angel it is."

- Heard that, Shidou nodded deeply.

"Right... even Kotori has an embarrassing past."

"Huh? W-What are you talking about?"

- Shidou said with a distant look. Kotori knitted her brows while turning her cheek red.

"For example when you wet the bed back when we sleep together. I told our parents that I did it since you cried that much. Thinking back now, dad and mom's probably knows judging from their face back then..."

"Kyaa! Kyaaaaaaaaa!"

- Shidou said while folding his hands. Heard that, Kotori scream and close Shidou's mouth with her hands. Yamai sisters who heard the conversation then look at them.

"Un? What are you talking about. You two looks fun."

"Agreement. I think I heard about wetting bed just now."

"N-not wetting bed! More importantly! If you've finished preparing the table, let's help arranging the food! Kaguya can you take care of mackerel, Yuzuru can you take care of the stew!?"

"I-I see..."

"Affirmative. I understand..."

- Kotori answered to them and hand Kaguya and Yuzuru the chopsticks and a ladle. Yamai sisters being overwhelmed by Kotori looks quickly follow her command. After Kotori see them start moving their hands, she look back to Shidou. Shidou choked when he saw Kotori's face.

"...If you say that again when someone's around... you know what will happen."

"S-sure..."

- Kotori said to him with a chilled voice. Shidou then remembered Kotori also know a lot of Shidou's past. If he try to disobey her, then it's not very hard to think what will happen. Shidou raised up both of his hands to give up. Seeing that, Kotori then let out a small breath and sit on the chair.

"That's not what I meant. I mean if an angel like that exists, all kind of security will become useless. Even a country's most classified information could be known easily. — Depends how you use it, it could easily trigger a war. And to think something like that were in DEM's hands until now... it's scary enough to think about it."

"T-that's right..."

- Even though Shidou do not think Nia will do that, if that power falls into someone's hands with malice, the world could see another kind of treat other than Space Quake for sure. Kotori take Chupa Chups out of her mouth and swing it like a conductor's baton.

"Also incidentally"

"Huh? What is it?"

"If such an angel exists, it might be able to give us information about <Phantom>."

"...! That's right!"

- Shidou widen his eyes.

"And also —"

"Also?"

- Shidou asked her back. Kotori avert her eyes and continue,

"...it might also know about the memory that Shidou and Mana forgot."

"Ah —"

- Shidou widen his eyes again. Even though Shidou and Mana are supposed to be siblings, they do not have memories when they are together. Kotori make a complex expression on her face and rest her elbows on the table.

"...Well, but that's only a big if. We are not sealing spirits in order to abuse their power. The primary objective is to put Nia under our protection. — Of course, I'll support you as usual, but give it your all, Shidou."

"S-sure... I understand."

- It's as Kotori said. Even though Shidou want to know about <Phantom> and his own's past, that should be a side objective. If he were to put that as primary objective, Nia would probably able to sense that selfish motive of him.

- Shidou shake his head to clear the distracting thoughts and grip his fist tight.

- Two days after. Shidou is waiting for Nia at the front of Electric Town ticket gate in Akihabara station. He is paying his attention to the ticket gate to not overlook Nia.

'— Test, test. Can you hear, Shidou?'

"Yes, I can hear."

'It's almost time. — Since we can't use <Fraxinus> we cannot teleport you in case something happens. Even though she doesn't seems to like to fight... make sure to pay attention to her.'

"Sure. She even said she don't have much time, I'll have to somehow raise up her affection today."

- Shidou said so. Next moment, another voice is then hear from the Incom,

'Commander, Shidou-kun, she's here! The target... Nia!'

"...! So she's here."

'Well then, let's go, Shidou. — Let's our battle<date> commerce.'

"Yes—!"

- Shidou nodded to her and move his finger away from the Incom. Shidou scan his eyes through the enormous number of people who just came down from the train and went pass the ticket gate. Among those people, a familiar face could be found. Nia — the spirit who Shidou have an appointment with today.

- Nia is not wearing the roomwear like when she collapsed on the street few days ago, nor the nun-like Astral Dress. She is wearing jeans with a down jacket and covering her mouth with a scarf. Her glasses become foggy every time she breath.

- Other than that, she also have a rucksack on her back and a suitcase in her left hand. The rucksack is completely flat as if she didn't put anything in it. Not only that, she also have a carry cart folded and tied to the suitcase with a belt.

- "...Uoh" Shidou let out a dry smile seeing Nia's appearance that sacrificed cuteness and attractiveness for carrying capacity. Noticing Shidou, Nia then wave her hand and drag her suitcase to him.

"Hey, hey, Boy. Good morning."

"...Ah, yeah. You looked fully equipped today, don't you?"

- Nia widen her eyes at what Shidou just said and laugh with her shoulders shaking.

"What are you talking about. We haven't even buy any items yet."

"O-oh, you're right."

- When Shidou answered back vaguely, Kotori's voice is heard from his Incom.

'— Shidou, a choice just appeared.'

- The crew of <Fraxinus> are gathered in <Ratatoskr>'s commander room in underground facility. Live feed of Nia in clothes without any attractiveness is shown in the monitor on the wall with a choice appeared above it:

(1) "Your clothes looks very cute. It suits you very well."

(2) "What's with that unsophiscated fashion. Let me choose you a new one."

(3) "Hm... you sure wear something that is worth trying to take it off"

- The underground facility also has its equipment connected to the <Fraxinus>'s AI. Kotori command the crew to begin choosing. The crew then start manipulating the console in front of them. Not before long, the result appear on the screen. (1) has the least vote while (2) and (3) has the most.

"Hmm, what a surprising result. I didn't thought (1) would have the least votes."

"Because um, it's hard to say this, but Nia-chan's clothings is kinda..."

"I agree. If he praise her clothes, that would sounds like a sarcasm."

- Kotori said while moving Chupa Chups in her mouth up and down. <Nail Knocker> Shiizaki and <Deep Love> Minowa then added while looking at Nia in the monitor with their hands on their chin. Kotori don't disagree with them, since Nia's clothings is very un-girl-like.

"In that case, isn't (2) better? Start with something harsh and let her see the gentle side. You also create a chance to choose her a new cloth with this choice. I'm sure a girl will fall for it if you do this to her."

- <Company Director> Migimoto said while giving a thumbs up. However, <Dimension Breaker> Nakatsugawa and <Bad Marriage> Kawagoe then deny his words.

"No, please think about it properly. Nia-chan is not here to buy a new clothes! She is here for manga and light novel and figure and anime Blu-rays! Bringing her into a clothing shop right now would be nothing but a torture!"

"I agree. And from Shidou-kun's story, she's also fine with dirty topics. A good dirty joke could work for coming on step closer to her."

"Hmm..."

- Heard everyone's opinion, Kotori then say to the mic that connected to Shidou's Incom.

"— Shidou. It's (3)."

- Shidou feel a cramp on his cheek hearing Kotori's order. Even with Nia, saying that right after they met might make her put on her guard for the whole day. However, Shidou can't keep quiet forever. He took a deep breath then take a look at Nia's clothes from top to bottom and say while rubbing his chin,

"H-hm... you sure wear something that is worth trying to take it off"

"Eh?"

- Nia widen her eyes. But then,

"Uhehehe, what was that, Boy? Do you plan to do that to me today? You sure is a carnivore despite how you look."

- Nia then poke Shidou in the ribs with her below.

"Ahaha... no, I didn't..."

"Eh? But do you have to do that much to seal spirits power? Well, I thought I only have to kiss. Looks like I didn't think about it enough. I should have researched more. Hey, is it okay if I'm going to change my pantsu first?"

"E-Ehhhh?"

- Shidou scream, but Nia only giggled at him.

"I'm joking, joking."

- Said that, Nia then pat Shidou on his shoulder. Shidou feel relief at what she said while making a wry smile.

"I did wear my lucky pantsu today."

"So the joke was the other part!?"

- Heard that, Nia then laugh while holding her stomach. Looks like that was also a joke.

'She sure is pretty energetic...' Kotori said in amazed voice via an Incom.
'But looks like that wasn't so bad. Let's continue in this pace.'

"Y-yeah... right."

- Shidou replied in a small voice. However, noticing Shidou's looks, Nia then move her brows a little and look into Shidou's face.

"Nn? Ah, could you possibly talking with the commanding room?"

"Eh!? Well, I..."

"I wonder if there's camera around here. Yay~ Kotori-chan, are you looking?"

- Nia look up around while making a peace sign. The passerby look at Nia for a second at here strange behavior but quickly avert their eyes away as they've lost interest.

'...Yes, I'm looking. Veeeery closely.'

- Kotori said via the Incom. Shidou could imagine Kotori's painful face from her voice. But it's not surprising, with the power of <Rasiel>, Nia should already know what Shidou and Kotori are going to do.

- Even though Shidou already prepared himself, it's still very awkward to do so knowing the other party already know he's dating with her in order to seal her spirit power. Shidou then call her with a sigh,

"...She said she's looking closely."

"Ooh! I couldn't found the camera at all. How high-tech!"

- She then bend her body, say "Yoshi," place her hands on her waist and bow to Shidou.

"Well then, please take a good care of me today. Please feel free to persuade me all you want."

"A-ah... sure."

- Shidou feel somewhat embarrassed when someone said that to him face-to-face. He replied to her with his cheek in red. However Nia did not take notice and look into the town.

"Well, then... let's go to my good old Akiba"

"— I'll take that. It's hard to walk if you have to carry everything alone, don't you."

"Ah, really? Aww, Boy sure is a gentleman."

- Shidou offer to drag Nia's suitcase for her. Nia replied while poking his upper arm heard that and hand over him the suitcase. She then open and close her hand that become empty and continue,

"Nn, well? My hand is empty now, what do you think? Want to hold it?"

"Eh?"

- Shidou widen her eyes at Nia's casual speech. He didn't expected her to offer that. Seeing Shidou's reaction, Nia then make a 'Agh' face and poke her head a little.

"Sorry sorry, the earlier, I should let the boy say it to me."

"Y-yeah... right."

- Shidou then reach his hand out to Nia while feeling a little embarrassed.

"Nia... let's hold hands."

- Heard that, Nia hunched her shoulders and avert her eyes away.

"Eh... doing that even though we just met..."

"It was you who started!"

- Shidou screamed. Nia then laugh "ahahaha" while holding her stomach.

"Well, hahaha, just joking."

- She then hold Shidou's hand that he reached out to her. Nia didn't wear any gloves. Shidou could feel Nia's hand is a little cold.

"Well, let's go."

"Y-yeah."

- Shidou then start walking like he's being pulled by Nia. Kotori then call him on Incom that he's being lead by her the whole time. Shidou make a troubled face while continue walking. When they're arrived at the street, Nia stopped walking and release Shidou's hand. Nia then run to the street and take a deep breath.

"Nn! It has been a while! Akiba! I have returned!"

- Said that, Nia then look around.

"Sure a lot is changed since it has been a while! How fresh!"

"Don't you already know about all the changes from <Rasiel>?"

"Well, I tried to not rely too much on <Rasiel> if unnecessary."

"Eh? Is that so? Why?"

- Nia hesitated a little hearing Shidou's question. However she then quickly changed into her normal tone. Nia place one of her hand on her waist and shake her finger at him.

"Well, I said it didn't I? That I hate spoilers. Also anything I can know from <Rasiel> is just a knowledge and information. It's much different from the real thing that I can see and listen and feel it."

"I-is that so..."

"Yup. That is the case. — Well then, let's start from books as planned..."

- Said that, Nia then remembered something.

"Ah — well..."

"Hm? What is it?"

"Well, you see, at least in the name, this date is Boy's reward? It isn't good to start from my shopping."

"Actually, I don't really mind..."

"Nope nope! I can't allow that! So, come on this way!"

- Nia then pull Shidou's hand and start walking.

"W-where are we going?"

"Ehehe, that's something to look forward to."

- Nia and Shidou then arrive at a certain building,

"Here is the place."

"Here..."

"Yes, cosplay store."

"Why!?"

- Shidou screamed but Nia only laugh ahaha in enjoyment.

"Why... well, you already know. Let's enter, let's enter."

"W-wait... don't push me."

- Shidou then entered the store while being pushed by Nia. The store is full of costume from anime character and profession uniform. Nia then look around the store with stars in her eyes and come back to Shidou with three uniforms in her hand.

"— Here! And here comes the choice!"

"Eh!?"

- Shidou shook his shoulder at Nia's words that remind him of Kotori's order.

"So which costume Boy want me to wear!

(1) Nurse uniform

(2) Maid uniform

(3) Valkyrie Misty's Midnight Final Form

Start choosing!"

- Nia then start making a "tick tick tick" sound. Shidou look at the uniform in Nia's hands. Only the last one look fancy and different from the other.

"Eh, well, even if you asked me out of sudden... before that, isn't the last one completely different kind!?"

'Shidou, just play along with Nia. Choose something!'

- Kotori's voice is then heard from the Incom.

"Ah damn... I don't know what happen anymore...!"

- Shidou then point to one of the uniform in Nia's hands while still in confusion.

"Then (1). (1) please!"

"(1) right?"

"...Yeah."

"Really? Are you not going to regret?"

"Y-yeah..."

"Are you really sure to choose something else other than Midnight Final Form?"

"If you want to wear it that much then don't make it a choice!"

"Joking, joking. It's service time right now. I'll follow Boy's desire."

"Well it's not quite my desire..."

"So is it that case? After a nurse play a prank on you when you were hospitalized in the past, you can no longer be aroused without a white robe anymore?"

"Can you please not make up a story!?"

- Shidou shouted. Nia then laugh once again.

"Well, please wait a minute. I'll change my clothes."

- Nia then go into the changing room in front of them. After she closed the curtain, a sound of she undressing could be heard. Shidou can't help but feel awkward and avert his eyes away while turning his cheek red. After a while, Nia then raise up her voice.

"—Ah, Boy, Boy. If you're going to peep, now is the right time. I just noticed when I look at the mirror, but a half-worn stocking sure is super lewd."

"What are you talking about!?"

- Shidou shook at her words.

"Eh, don't you think this is amazing? It's an unexpected synergy effect."

- Nia said that and open the curtain from inside.

"Ha...!?"

- Shidou froze at the sudden happening. Nia is still in middle of changing clothes. She is wearing a nurse's cap, with a uniform with its button open, and a stocking half-worn. It is super lewd as Nia said.



"See, isn't it pretty lewd?"

"Before that can you finish wearing it!?"

- Shidou shouted and panicky closing the curtain.

"Well then, since I've done my quota, let's go to bookstores!"

- Few minutes later. Shidou and Nia left the cosplay shop. Shidou feel extremely tired even though the date was just starting. Nia place her hand on her chin and thinking something.

"Where should I go first~. — Ah, just for reference, which faction is Boy's? Mate's? Gama's? Tora's?"

"Huh...?"

"Not huh. I mean Animate or Gamers or Toranoana. Ah, or maybe Melon Books or COMIC ZIN or Shosen Book Tower?"

"...Um, what's the difference?"

"Hm~ they're actually quite different. Well, the books are mostly the same, but each store has different special bonus or has different series it is pushing for. It's also fun to see the in-store hand-written advertising and special corners since they depends directly on the taste of store's staff. For buying older volumes, then going to larger store is also a good idea... ah, Tora and Melon also sell doujinshi too. There are cases where some circle only sell exclusively in some store, so I have to visit both."

- Shidou sweat on his cheek at Nia who became talkative out of sudden and returned her with just "O-okay...."

"Well, if you don't have any special preferences, then let's just start from somewhere nearby. Okay?"

"Yeah, sure."

- Shidou and Nia then head to the store near a train station. A newly released books are lined up in the store. There are also manga magazine, game magazine and seiyuu magazines lined up next to the wall. Nia raise up a "Fu... fuoooooooo!?" when she entered the store. The surrounding look at her but she didn't take notice and start taking manga from the shelf.

"T-This is... Kurauchi-sensei's new work!?"

"Ah, that one. It's the one currently serializing. Do you like Kurauchi's work?"

"Just liking couldn't describe my feeling! My life changed because of Kurauchi-sensei's "Chronocle"! That series was the reason why I aim to be a mangaka! Tokiya is my wife! He's male character but he's my wife anyway!"

- Shidou make a wry smile at Nia's rapid speak. Shidou also know about "Chronocle" since it's very popular series and has been animated. Though he's not passionate about it like Nia. Nia then put that book in the stack and bought it to the cashier.

"H-hey hey."

- Shidou walk to her and take half of her purchase stack.

"Oops, sorry Boy"

"Are you going to buy all this?"

"Of course! Thanks to DEM, I haven't read anything for 5 years. Since my work has finished, I'll read everything to all my heart's desire today. Ah, of course I'll buy the existing volume too since it's meaningless to buy only the latest volume."

- Shidou nod to her with a sweat on his cheek. Nia smile back to him and pay for the books she bought. She then pack all those books in the suitcase Shidou is pulling.

- Once they're done, Shidou and Nia enter the elevator to the second floor. In the second floor, there are even more books than the first. Not only a newly released books and special corners, there are also many kind of books packed into each shelf.

"The first floor is normally for newly released books. The main force is here... ooohh! This one also has been released!? I have to buy...!"

"W-what is it out of sudden."

- Shidou take a look at the book in Nia's hands and knitted his eyebrows. In her hands, there is a novel... with two half-naked boys tangling together on its cover. There is also some weird Shidou is not familiar with written on its Obi. He wonder what does "My Caledvwlch" even means.

- Even though Shidou is not very familiar with this genre, he do know that it existed. Shidou couldn't say anything. Noticing that, Nia then breath out a sigh while smiling nihilisticly.

"Hmp, those without Otome circuit do not understand."

"...Are you sure that's the right way to use it...?"

"Of course. A real pro of this way can judge an attribute of something by just looking."

- Nia said that and temporary return the book to the shelf. She then make a peace sign with both of her hands and look at Shidou through it, as if she's analyzing something. Few seconds later, she open wide her eyes and continue,

"— 'Weak-minded - Sou-uke'"

"Hey wait what did you just classified!?"

- Even though Shidou don't know its meaning, he feel Nia just classified him as something not very good.

"Ahaha, it's okay, it's okay. I'm not specialist in this kind of thing, it's not that accurate. The real specialist can find a hidden possibility within you."

- Shidou do not understand what is okay at all. However, seeing Nia's voice full of confident make Shidou don't know how to reply back to her. Shidou then let out a sigh.

"Even still... you sure read many kind of books. I saw you bought everything from shoujo manga to hard-boiled manga earlier."

"Nn... well, I could read anything. There's no kind of book I don't read. If anything, I like the one that I could feel the author is writing with enthusiasm."

"Enthusiasm, huh..."

"Yup yup. Like this one, it's pretty amazing. It starts in a fantasy world settings with generic prince and knight story at first... but it is NTR as story goes on. You could feel the author's 'I want to write this, do you have problem with it!?'-passion coming from it. That scene in volume 3 where Orpheus become a prisoner is really amazing. I never thought you could use that thing like that..."

- Nia picked up the book she returned to the shelf earlier and started talking. Shidou couldn't answer anything but "I-is that so..." Noticing that, Nia then stick out her tongue.

"Ah, sorry sorry. I guess it's too quick for Boy. Wait a minute, let me finish paying for these books. I'll take you somewhere fun next."

"Somewhere fun...?"

- Shidou incline his head in wonder. Nia smiled and take her books to the cashier. Once she finished, Shidou and Nia then leave the store and walk in a footpath along the street. Nia stopped in front of a store that looks like a PC store.

"Here it is."

"Here... but I'm not really into PC or something."

"Ah, no, no. This way."

- Said that, Nia then lead Shidou inside the store and stop at certain corner. She then turn back to Shidou.

"Okay, just choose whatever you like. Since this is a special occasion, I'll buy you the one you want."

- Nia then point Shidou to the items on the shelves. — To the package with an illustration of a girl in a risky uniform.

"This..."

"Yup. Eroge."

"Wait, I'm still second year in high school!?"

"Eh!? There's high school student who don't play eroge!?"

"Which kind of world you have been living in!?"

- Shidou raise up his voice. Nia then make a surprising looks saying "The culture is too different!?" on her face.

"I see... the times have changed..."

- Nia said it with her arms folded. She nodded to herself and change the expression on her face.

"But don't you have, well, that moment? Eh, high-school boy? With all the treasure before you, don't a part of your body get out of control?"

- Nia said with a smirk on her face and poke Shidou's ribs with her elbow.

"W-wait... stop it."

"Ehehe. There's no reason to be embarrassed about. Sexual desire is human's three biggest desire next to eating desire and sleeping desire."

"Even still!"

"But even though humans die when they don't eat or sleep, they don't die if they don't have sex. How strange it is, the sexual desire. Don't you think it's weird to put in the 'three biggest desire' category? Isn't it like the strongest man of four heavenly kings don't really have any special powers?"

"Wait, it was you who started this three great desire thing."

"If sexual desire become essential for humans to live, then the virgin boys and girls could be set free."

"What are you talking about!?"

- Shidou raise up his voice. Nia then cheerfully laugh.

"Ah, sorry sorry. I just derailed the topic. Anyway, which kind of Boy's favorite? Naki-ge? Chuuni-ge? Or humiliation?"

"N-no, as I said..."

- When Shidou scratch his cheek and trying to reply her back, a voice could be hear from the Incom.

'— Wait a minute Shidou, a choice just appeared!'

"Right now!?"

- Shidou raise up his voice regardless that it could be heard by Nia.

- Few hours later. Shidou and Nia are taking a late lunch at a hamburger shop nearby.

"Ha! I'm satisfied, I'm satisfied. I'm heartily enjoyed it."

"Yeah. It's my first time to spend this much time walking around Akiba, but it has been surprisingly fun."

- Shidou let out a small breath while replying to Nia. Nia's rucksack and suitcase that were empty when they met are now full to the point they have to expand the carry cart and tie the stuff they bought with a belt.

- Of course, it's not that Shidou got lead by Nia's all the time. With <Ratatoskr>'s support, Shidou did made some action on his own to rise Nia's affection. All of them saw a good reaction from Nia.

"Isn't it? It's the best to buy a treasure with your own hands. Even though online shopping is convenient, it can't beat this feeling."

"Ah... yeah, I could understand that."

- Shidou scratch his cheek and nod to her in agreement. In case of Shidou, what come up on his mind is not a bookstores but rather an internet supermarket. Even though it's convenient that they could deliver to home, think up of a menu while walking around looking at the stores is also one thing he always look forward to.

"Ehehe. Boy also knows? Even though convenient is good, but it can't beat able to touch the real thing."

- Said that, Nia then make a friendly smile. Seeing her smile make Shidou think. That being with Nia all day today make him realize that Nia is really like to laugh. Even though she sometimes bring up a topic he don't know how to respond, she is frank and open, she is a very pleasant girl without any secret intents.

- At the same time, that thinking also make the sense of mission that faded away until now within Shidou become stronger. — Shidou think he must protect this girl. And in order to do that, he have to rise her affection toward him and kiss her. As if she could read Shidou's mind, a voice is then heard from the Incom.

'— That was good. Rather, don't you think it has been a while since you have a date this smooth?'

- Kotori said in a joking tone. But thinking back, except for the date after sealing, he never had any date that went this smooth before. There's no moment that the affection dropped because of a wrong choice, nor a moment of being attacked by the girl. He was just enjoying the dialogue and shopping with her. Enough for Shidou to forgot the sense of mission for a moment.

- However,

'...!? C-commander, please see this—'

- That atmosphere is ruined by the panic voice of the crew.

'What happened, Minowa?'

'Please see this number...! This is Nia-chan's affection graph... but today the whole day, her affection never changed...! This level is just a friend...! Even if he kiss her now, he won't be able to seal all of her powers!'

'What!?'

"Eh...?"

- Shidou knitted his eyebrows at the words he heard from the Incom.
Noticing that, Nia then change her expression.

"...Ah, don't tell me something happened in Kotori-chan's side?"

"Eh? Er, um"

- Nia's words hit the nail. When Nia see Shidou couldn't continue his words,
she then scratch her head like she known about everything.

"Nn... I guess it's that right? Affection. That you can't seal me if affection
isn't above certain level."

".....!"

- Shidou thought for a second how did she know. However he then realized
any secret is meaningless for Nia.

"Well... for me, it sure is uncomfortable to live while being targetted. So if
you could seal me that would be good too... but as I thought, that's no good.
I'm really sorry for wasting your time."

"I-is there something I did that offended you?"

- Shidou said. Nia scratch her cheek as if it's something it's hard for her to
say. She then continue with hesitant,

"Well... it's not that. It's more of my problem, or rather..."

"Eh...?"

- Shidou asked back. Nia make a wry smile and reply him,

"—The truth is... _I never fall in love with anything but 2D_..."

"...Eh?"

- Shidou only widen his eyes at her words.

Chapter 3 - Very well. Then 2D is what you shall have.

"...Seriously? Can this really be happening...?"

- Inside <Ratatoskr>'s underground facility, Kotori mumbled in despair.

"2D... so in short, manga and anime characters?"

"I-I think so..."

- <Company Director> Migimoto replied to her while sweating on his forehead. The same moment, a voice is then heard from a speaker in the room,

'W-what should I do...'

- Shidou on the screen is now in a toilet room nearby. In order to ask for an advice from commanding's room, Shidou use toilet as a reason to temporary separate himself from Nia. Even though Nia could easily know about their discussion, there's no sign that she's going to use <Rasiel> right now.

"Even if you asked so... even though Miku's case was pretty troublesome, I couldn't even anticipate it this time..."

"Well, there are a lot of young people these day who are attached to anime and manga characters. Given these characters are usually made to be loved by the viewers and readers, it could be said they have an ideal personality. And they're generally good-looking. Anyone can probably feel a gap when comparing a real person with those characters."

"You sure know about it..."

- Nakatsugawa answered to Kotori's words. Kotori lower her eyelid by half and reply back to him. Kotori then remembered Nakatsugawa's alternate name is <Dimension Breaker>. A romance master who have 100 wives in 2D. However, Nakatsugawa move his finger left and right,

"Commander, Seiyuu is fine for me too."

"...Oh, okay."

- Kotori sighed while letting out a sigh. However, Kotori think that he has a point and make a difficult face.

"The gap between reality... huh. But even in that case, it's not like they like any 2D characters, right?"

"Of course! All my beloved wives are carefully chosen from 20 years of my otaku life!"

"Sure, sure. Let's leave that aside. — That means there's also a character that Nia likes, correct? Didn't she said something about liking some character ealier?"

"That should be Tokiya from 'Chronocle.' He's a cool-headed character and pretty popular among women."

"Hmp... I see. That means Nia _could love that character_, couldn't she?"

- Kotori then make a wicked grin.

'...Eh?'

- On the screen, Shidou is sweating on his cheek at the foreboding hearing Kotori's words.



"Nn..."

- Nia is waiting for Shidou in the burger shop. It has been 20 minutes since Shidou told her he is going to toilet. Nia feel bored at waiting already.

"Nn... I don't want to say anything about other's physiological phenomenon... but he sures take time. Is he fixing his makeup or something?"

- Nia move a straw in her mouth left and right while mumbled. She then remembered.

"Wait... ah. I guess he's consulting with the commanding room?"

- If that's the case then she have no complains. Nia just dropped a bombshell to him just earlier. "...As I thought, maybe it was a bad idea..." Nia knew to herself since the beginning that she can't love a real human. Nia more or less feel guilty at all the teasing she did to Shidou.

- However, what she said to Shidou wasn't a lie. For Nia, she never mind if she's going to lost her spirit power. Or rather, if it's possible, she even want to seal it. That's why when she know about the boy who can seal spirit power by kissing — she decided to come into contact with him. If it is Shidou, then maybe he can open her heart up.

- However, the result is as Nia expected. Nia don't hate Shidou, or rather she's grateful to him for helping her escape from DEM's transportation plane. Even today's date was fun. However, it ended up in a failure. Nia can't open herself up to him even a little bit.

"No matter how good that person is, if I'm going to consider him as 3D... I can't really take it"

- Nia let out her breath a little and scratch her head. That moment, Nia feel someone is appearing from her behind. Looks like Shidou is coming back from the toilet.

"Ah, welcome back, Boy. Let's leave the —"

- Nia stopped her words and her movement when she turned back.

"Eh..."

- Over there, it is not the person she knows. It is a man covered by a worn-out mantle with bandage over his forehead and his hand. On his hips there is a sword hanging to it. A man with long hair and dirty looks, no doubt that he is —



"T-Tokiya...?"

- Nia let out a dumbfounded voice. Nia's first love, Tokiya from "Chronocle" is standing in front of her.

"....."

- Shidou is trying his best to stay calm in front of Nia. It's no doubt that his heart is beating heart like it's exploding. That is because Shidou's appearance right now is something that you won't normally see outside an anime event. Even right here in Akihabara, everyone in the store is looking at him with an interested looks. However Shidou can't just stand and do nothing,

"— I'm going to sit here, woman."

- Shidou said to Nia who is looking up at him in a lower voice than usual. He is trying to mimic Chronocle's Tokiya from his memory. Shidou then sit down on the chair next to Nia. Seeing that, Nia then shake her shoulders and stare at him while fixing the position of her glasses.

"T-Tokiya...? Why..."

- Saying to that, Nia then realized something and widen her eyes.

"...Wait, Boy!?"

"What are you talking about. You don't have any rights to call me Boy."

".....!"

- Shidou then look at Nia with a cold looks. Nia choked a little and turned her cheek slightly red. Next moment, a voice is heard from Shidou's Incom.

'T-This is...!'

'What is it'

'Yes! Nia-chan's excitement has risen!'

'Her affection is also rising a little!'

""

- Shidou is feeling relief that the plan is working without showing it on his expression.

"Hoo... he~..."

- Nia look at Shidou from the top of his head to his feet then take a pose like an art critic and nod to herself.

"Whoa... this is really well-made. It's completely different from a cheap costume. I've seen a lot of Tokiya cosplay before, but I've never seen something in this quality before."

- She then take Shidou's mantle and turned her face red. Shidou isn't so sure if Nia is having affection for him or just admiring his clothes. However, it doesn't change the fact that her affection has risen. There's no other choice than to continue the acting. Shidou knock off Nia's hands that is grabbing his mantle.

"You're annoying, woman."

"Hau..."

- Nia bend her body back while turning her face completely red at Shidou's action.

'The affection has risen again...!'

'At this condition... he can do it!'

- Crew's voices is heard from the Incom. Shidou tried his best to act like Tokiya and looks like that tugged her heartstrings. Nia then start becoming restless and start fixing her hair. That moment, a fanfare is heard from the Incom.

'Shidou, it's time! Her affection has risen enough to be sealed. Don't let this chance escape!'

".....!"

- Shidou stiffen his body at Kotori's words. Even though this is in front of public, if he let this chance escape then it's unknown when the chance will come again. Shidou make up his mind and turn himself to Nia while trying to stay calm despite his heart's beating hard.

"Eh...? What is it?"

"Shut up."

- Nia closed her mouth hearing Shidou's command. Shidou then place his hand on Nia's shoulder and lift her chin up with his another hand. He then begin moving closer and closer to Nia's lips. Even though it's not a very justified act, but he can seal her spirit power this way. However,

"...Hey"

- Before his lips could touch her, Nia then let out a cold voice unlike her enthusiastic looks from earlier. The next moment, an alarm is then heard from the Incom.

'Shidou, the affection is dropping rapidly!'

"Eh...?"

- Shidou let out his natural voice. Nia then push him back and let out a sigh then scratch her head.

"Hey — what are you doing?"

"Huh? What...?"

"There is no way Tokiya would make a move on a woman! At least think with common sense! Tokiya is ongoing an never-ending travel to get a revenge for his sister Hibari who is also his lover!? During that travel of loneliness, he met with Ryugo and Kotetsu and others, fight with them and feel a bond of friendship!"

- Shidou being overwhelmed by Nia's sudden change stepped back together with a chair.

"The usual coupling is Toki x Ryu! I'm fine with Toki x Ko too! Coupling with woman is only okay with Hibari if it is a dream or a recollection! There's no place for me to get in within that beautiful world! It's enough for me to just look from outside! I'm a solitude observer! I'd rather be a wall!"

"H-hey, calm down, Nia..."

- Shidou tried to calm her down. Nia then make a sharp looks at him.

"Tokiya don't say something like that!"

"Uwa...!"

"— If you want me to Dere that much, then come back as a 2D!"

- Nia kicked Shidou's butt and drive him out of the hamburger shop.



"...And so it was no good."

- Shidou let out a huge sigh and said so. He is now back from Akihabara to the underground commanding room in Tenguu city with plaster all over his body. After that, Nia who see her beloved character blasphemed and couldn't forgive it, leave the hamburger shop in anger and go back to her mansion. — Of course with everything her bought.

"Arara... looks like you've got beaten pretty bad."

"Whose fault do you think it is."

"There's no other choices. If she said she likes 2D, then there's not much we can do right away. — Even though the result may ended up as a failure, but at least we know her affection has risen once. This is a very important data."

"Even if you said so, that's the affection of her toward Tokiya, isn't it? Then there's no use since we can't use the same method again..."

"...No."

- It was Reine who replied to Shidou's question.

"...It depends. The result means if the character she likes turned into 3D, it is possible for him to gain her affection."

"I-I see... but isn't that the same as what we've just done? No matter how hard I tried, I'm not very confidence that I could act well enough to be able to convince Nia. Even if we could seal her that way, I'm scare of what might follows..."

- Shidou make a sour face. That point is Shidou's anxiety. Because Shidou is not Tokiya, there will definitely be a point where he can't kept himself

within Nia's ideal characterization of Tokiya. In that case, Nia's emotion would become unstable easily and cause the spirit power to reverse back to her.

- Reine nodded to Shidou like she agrees with his thought and continue,

"...I have a way."

"A way...?"

"Yes"

- Said that, Kotori then show Shidou the monitor in front of him. In the monitor, there is a live feed of Nia taken with autonomic camera.

"It's as Shidou says. If you continue acting as a character, then there'll be a point where you can't keep doing so. — But, if there's a character that Shidou can perfectly act as, and can continue doing so without ever worrying about being out of character, then that's another story."

"Huh...? Well that might be true... but there's no way such a character exists."

"Well, just wait and see. It should arrive soon."

"Arrive?"

- Shidou said that and Kotori make a grin.

"Ah..."

- Nia is back at her mansion lying down on the bed with books surrounding her. She closed the manga she just finished and hugged it within her chest. Even though she just bought a lot of books, she doesn't really feel like she is enjoying them. Nia keep thinking about that boy — Itsuka Shidou in her mind.

"Um..."

- Nia place the book to the book stack next to the bed and change to hold a pillow,

"...I guess it is bad idea to come back alone after all."

- Nia mumbled and turned her body. She got angry at Shidou for clothing like Tokiya that she loves, but acting in a way Tokiya would never do. Now that she calm down and thinking back, it was really horrible for her to do that. As an elder, she should be a bit more generous. And it's not that Shidou did it to make fun of her. Nia let out a little breath and touch her lips with her index finger.

"...I should let him kiss... but then if the spirit power can't be sealed without me opening my heart to him, then I guess it's meaningless..."

- Nia hug the pillow tight. Even though she haven't lookup how <Ratatoskr> calculate the affection, it is probably not enough for her to be sealed. That is because Nia cannot open up her heart to 3D humans.

"Ahh what should I do. tell me, Rasiemon!"

- Nia kick and mumbled. However there's nobody answering her. <Rasiel> is omniscient, however it can't tell her what to do. Nia look up to the ceiling and raise up her left hand. If she command in her head, <Rasiel> will appear and tell her everything she want to know. For example — like what Shidou is doing.

"....."

- That moment, Nia choked and pull her hand back. It was because the intercom rang. It was a delivery person saying there's a package for her. Nia incline her head since she do not have an idea of what it might be. However, she decide to accept it anyway.

- Nia unlock the mansion entrance and let the delivery person inside. Not before long, the delivery person come to her room. Nia sign the package, the delivery person then bow to her and leave.

- Nia close the door and unpack the package. Inside, there's a game package and a message paper in it.

"Hm...? What is it what is it? Thank you for your continued support. This is a special trial version of our new game for you to try...?"

- Nia scratch her head. She used to send a response for a game company's questionnaire in the past. Maybe it's somehow related.

"Well, anything is fine. If they give me I'll take it. Maybe I should try it to change a mood."

- Nia walk to her work room, boot up her PC and put the disc in. After installing, a game screen is shown.

"'Love Me My Little Shid ~Girl's Side~'? Hm, I guess it is a school otome game?"

- Nia manipulate the cursor and click 'Start'. Then a screen appear for her to input her name in.

"Nn. There's no default name? Well, Nia then."

- Nia input her real name and start the game. The main character is a second year in high school who recently transferred into the school. From here, she will meet and in love with someone in the school.

- Even though Nia's home field is manga, game is also one of her favorites. For someone who can't love 3D like Nia, she is thankful for a Ren'ai simulation game for girls like this. Because she only need to click to get a handsome boy to come in love with her. Nia is also a girl. It's not like she don't want to love someone. Rather, she want to go Kyun Kyun too.

"Hmhm, looks like it's pretty orthodox simulation game. I guess it's up to the character."

- Nia continue clicking. At one scene, the main character's classmate call her with a gentle voice. A boy with a gender-natural looks. His name is — Shidou Itsuki.

"...Nn?"

- Nia incline her head. She feel this character is somehow similar to the boy she was with just earlier. However, she quickly discard that thought and continue clicking. Then Itsuki-kun smile and talk back to her.

'Haha... Nia sure is funny.'

"Uwaoh!?"

- Nia widen her eyes. The character just called her name in a natural voice even though it was the name she input. Even though games normally use composed voice of each syllable for names... but in this case there is no the uncanny feeling that come from such composed voices.

"Whoa! Amaz~ing! The world sure advance a lot while I'm away."

- Only for that reason alone got Nia hooked on the game. She then continue her conversation with Itsuki-kun. Not before long, Itsuki-kun decided to go to a date with her. He asked 'Where do you want to go?' However,

"...Huh!?"

- Even though this is where a choice normally appear, in this game it is a window with an instruction 'Please input the date plan you wish to have'.

"Don't tell me... it tell me to input with my keyboard!? It can't be possible..."

- Nia couldn't believe what she see and type in her plan cautiously.

"I want to go to buy doujinshi in Akiba'..."

- Nia hit the enter key violently as to say to the game that if it could response, then do it. Itsuki-kun then smile to her gently and say,

'Doujinshi at Akiba, huh. Haha, that's very Nia-like. Sure thing. — Ah, but since we're still high school student, nothing explicit okay?'

"Oooooooooohhhhhhhhhhh!?"

- Nia stand up from the chair at the reaction. She couldn't imagine how the technology has advanced while she has been confined away that made such a detailed response possible. Nia shout "The power of science is amazing!" and continue clicking.

"— Hmm, I see. Nia likes this kind of book, huh. ...No? I don't really mind. It's wonderful if you can be absorbed to yourself."

- In the underground <Ratatoskr> commanding room, Shidou is speaking those words while staring at the screen with headphone on his head. In the monitor is a live feed of gameplay. Shidou is responding to the text that sometimes got inputted into the game.

- After he see the conversation ended, Shidou turned off the mic and look at Kotori who sat behind him.

"...Hey, are you sure this is really okay?"

"Yes. Her affection is also rising smoothly. Once Nia satisfied with the game, it's now up to you to appear before her as 'Itsuki-kun.' You don't have to act anymore this time, since this character is Shidou yourself."

- Kotori said that and grin. <Ratatoskr>'s plan is to let Nia play a game that has Shidou acting as a character, and make her come in love with him.

"But why do you have a game like this? It's not like you can made it in just few hours?"

"...Well, just in case. Be prepared and have no regrets."

"I'm really wonder what you planned to use this game for..."

- Shidou scratch his cheek at Reine's response.

"Well Shidou, don't just stand there, the next line comes."

"O-okay."

- Shidou then continue to act as 'Itsuki-kun'. In left half of the monitor, there is a live feed of Nia playing the game and a graph of her condition. Everything is going smoothly as Kotori said. However, while speaking to the mic, Shidou knitted his eyebrows. He feel he's overlooking something.

'Whoa... game these days sure is amazing. If a trial is this amazing, I guess I'll have to buy the full version when it's out.'

- While Shidou is thinking, Nia smiled said that with a satisfied look. Then,

'Hmm? When is the full version coming out? Before that, what is the past work of the company that made this game...'

- She then raise her left hand and take a book out of the air.

"...! Ah —"

- Nia touch the cover of <Rasiel> and start losing expression on her face.

'...So this is your doing!'

- Nia let out a voice in anger. She stand up from the chair and give an angry stare at the autonomous camera.

'...Hey, I do know your objective, but I think you crossed the line this time. Not only you people blaspheme my Tokiya, now you're playing around with my pure heart.'

"N-Nia, it's not like you think..."

'Itsuki-kun please shut up!'

- Nia is completely hooked up to the game. She said back firmly.

"...S-sure..."

'Anyway, if you people do this again, I won't forgive it. — And I also need privacy, can you please not get this autonomous camera inside my room? That's all. If you break it, then there's no third chance.'

- Nia said that and turn herself away.



"...Everyone, thank you for gathering here. I think you already heard about it... but looks like we've got into a trouble."

- Kotori put her elbow on a round table and say with a difficult face. In the round table meeting room in underground facility, <Fraxinus>'s crew, Tohka, Yoshino, Natsumi, Yamai sisters and are gathered there.

- Even though Kotori don't really want to get other spirits to involve in capturing a new spirit, but for a spirit that she have never seen before like this, there's no other choice but to ask them for an advice. Since all spirits here has been sealed by Shidou, they might have some advice from that experience.

- A spirit — Tobiiichi Origami — then ask to confirm Kotori that the girl cannot love anything but a character from a game and manga or not. Kotori make a frown and nod to her.

"Ah~, I see~. I also have an idol acquaintance like that~"

- Miku said, then continue,

"She said her first love is Sieg-sama~ Ah, Sieg-sama is a character from an anime~ But that's just her character making~ To have the same hobby as her fans, so her fan could feel closer to her~. And as someone her fans be jealous with~. But that girl actually has a boyfriend~"

"...If Nia is the same then that would be easier... but judging from the numbers, looks like she's not lying."

- Miku said and laugh "ahaha." Heard that, Kotori then replied to her with a frown. Miku widen her eyes hearing Kotori's words.

- After that, Kaguya then surprised that Honjou Souji is a woman. Shidou asked her back if she knows Honjou Souji and she says yes. Yuzuru then add that Kaguya like shonen manga and usually buy ecchi manga by putting it between battle manga and sports manga. Kaguya shout and add that Yuzuru's shoujo manga has more explicit scene than the one Kaguya usually reads.

"Question. What do you mean by more. Please give me an example."

"W-well... like a man and woman on a bed..."

"Repeat. I can't hear. Please say it again."

"U-ugu... muu..."

- Kaguya then make a frustrated face and turned her face red. Looking at their conversation, Kotori then clap her hand and call them to do it later and now it's more important to find a way to capture Nia. Everyone make a "Muu..." and thinking for a while before Yoshino raise her hand.

"Um... is it okay?"

"Sure, please do."

"Um... I think, we should start slowly and get closer to Nia-san, step by step. If we approach her properly, I'm sure she will understand Shidou-san's goodness."

"Yoshino..."

- Shidou called her name. Yoshino then turn her cheek red. Kotori then groan and place her hand on her chin.

"It's true that would be the most justified way... even if she only love 2D, if we approach her sincerely, it's possible that she will open up."

"So you're going to switch to a long-term approach?"

- Shidou asked, but Kotori make a difficult face.

"At worst we might have to do it... but that would be the last option. The problem is time. If we take time to capture her, we don't have any guarantee that DEM won't come to her again."

"I-I'm sorry..."

- Hearing Kotori's words, Yoshino then hunch her shoulder and becoming apologetic. Kotori shake her head left and right and continue,

"There's no need for you to apologize. Even me want to take that approach... if she look at Shidou properly, then she will understand that Shidou easily rivals those manga characters."

- Kotori said while averting her eyes away a little and move her Chupa Chups up and down. Shidou feel itchy and scratch his head while having his cheek turned a little red. That is when Tohka who is folding her arms inclining her head look at Shidou.

"Hey Shido, why can't Nia love anything but 2D characters?"

"Eh? Umm... well..."

- Shidou can't answer Tohka's simple question. That is the main gist of the problem. Why she can only love 2D characters. Or put it the other way, why can't she love 3D person? Kotori who also have the same question put her hand on her chin and say,

"I also wonder about that... let me investigate about it."

"Eh? Investigate?"

"Considered that Nia has been mangaka for 10 years, no matter if she was an ex-human or a pure spirit, there would be some traces of her left in this world. If anything, that could become our clue."

"I see..."

- Shidou folded his arms and nodded to Kotori.

"Even still... I can't guarantee there will be something coming out of it. We still have to think up of some plans."

- Kotori said that, then Natsumi who sat next to Yoshino raise up a small voice,

"...Then isn't the best way is to have Shidou accommodates yourself to her taste? That should be the fastest way."

"That's right... but the cosplay operation and game operation also ended up in failure. It was a success when we let him cross-dress to capturing certain person, though..."

- Kotori then take a glance at Miku. Miku who noticed that throw a kiss at Kotori. Kotori let out a sigh and return her eyes to the table.

"...Even with Shidou, he can't cross the dimension border. Or should we just let a road roller run through him so he become completely flat?"

"H-hey, hey..."

- Shidou sweat on his cheek. Natsumi then agree with Kotori's idea and hold up her finger.

"...Ah, how about using my <Haniel> turning Shidou into a shape of manga book..."

"Isn't the approach to 2D just become ridiculous since earlier!?"

- Shidou said with a sweat on his cheek. Natsumi then puff her cheek.

"...O-of course I'm joking. Sorry then. Even though it's not my personality to make a joke. ...Okay fine. I'll keep quiet from now on..."

- Natsumi then slowly slip down from the chair. Shidou raise up his voice in hurry to stop her,

"N-no, that's not what I meant... sorry."

"Mu..."

"N-Natsumi-san..."

- Yoshino who is sitting next to Natsumi drag her up to her seat.

"—I see."

- Out of sudden, Origami who keep thinking since earlier raise up face.

"? What do you mean, Origami? Did you came up with anything?"

- Kotori asked her. Origami nod and say a word nobody expected,

"Natsumi's plan might make sense. — Let Shidou become a book."

- Shidou widen his eyes at Origami's words.

"Eh? W-wait a minute, even though Nia can't love anything but 2D, but that is a character in a manga not a manga book itself. Even if I become a book..."

- Shidou said while making a puzzled face. Natsumi then stare at him,

"...Ah, you actually listened to Origami. ...That's right. I can't really compare my head with Origami. Of course her words has more weight than me. It's fine. I don't mind it at all. It's a fact anyway..."

"T-that's not what I meant..."

- Natsumi then start sinking once again. Shidou tried to explain himself, but Origami continue her words without minding their conversations,

"That's no what I'm saying. I'm not saying to turn Shidou physically into a book — but creating a manga that has 'Shidou' a character in it."

'Na...!?'

- Everyone in the room then raise up their voices together. Only Tohka take a moment later to also raise up a 'Na...!' voice to match with everyone.

"I see..."

- Kotori place her hand on her mouth and make a serious face.

"A manga with Shidou as a main character... huh. In that case, we could say it is a 2D character."

"H-hey hey. Wait a minute. Even if we could do that, it doesn't mean me in manga is the same as me in real life isn't it? Won't that end up in the same result?"

- Shidou said with a frown. Judging from today's reaction, Nia is very strict about a reproduction of a character she loves. If she say 'Shidou won't say that' to Shidou, then that would be sort of identity crisis for him. However, Yamai sisters raise up their voice to deny Shidou's opinion,

"Fmp, then to avoid enstrangement from the reality, what about only write facts — Luckily, there're a lot of material around Shidou that could be turned into a manga."

"Agreement. If we just write Shidou as yourself, that won't be a lie to Nia just like with the game. As expected from Master Origami. That was a nice idea."

"N-no, b-but, Nia also have her own preferences, doesn't she? What's most important is whether she will read that and love the character..."

"I-it should... be fine..."

"Y-Yoshino...?"

- Shidou widen his eyes at Yoshino's strong tone. However, Yoshino turned her face red and continue while gripping her right hand tight.

"Shidou-san, helped us all... if we honest write what Shidou did... I'm sure Nia-san will love Shidou-san... too..."

"U-um..."

- Shidou feel shy at Yoshino's tone that she don't normally speak. The crew and the spirit then start pitching in an idea.

"Shidou-kun's documentary, is it? If that's the case then it might work..."

"But that will touch on spirits topic. Are we really okay with that?"

"Well, it is Nia who's going to read it. Even if it's leaked outside, nobody would think it's a nonfiction."

"Ooh... Shido is becoming a manga!? That's amazing! Let me help too!"

"Kukuku... looks like it's time for us Yamai to lend our power."

"Agreement. It's time for Yamai who, in the 39th illustration contribution match, got our work printed in a magazine under title 'a rare illustration from a twins' and ended up as a tie."

"...You two sure do everything..."

"H-Hey..."

- Shidou raise up his voice but nobody is taking notice. Kotori then knock the table to urge everyone to quiet down and ask anyone who agree with this plan to vote. Once Kotori said that, everyone but Shidou raise their hand up.

'.....'

- Everyone then look at Shidou. Shidou let out a breath and weakly raise his hand up. Everyone then raise up their voice in joy. Kotori then declare to everyone they're going with this plan and order to start constructing plot —

- Before Kotori could finish her words, a sound is heard from a console in the meeting room. "Eh...? What is that sound, Kotori?" Shidou asked. Kotori knitted her eyebrows and look at the console.

"A phone call. And it's from outside...? I've never seen this number before..."

- Kotori said in a dubious voice and accept the call. The next moment, a voice of a girl is heard from the speaker in the meeting room,

'— Ya. You sure are plotting, Boy.'

"Na...!?"

- Heard that, everyone including Shidou make an astonished looks.

"N-Nia...!?"

"That can't be! The connection in this facility is encrypted, it could not be that easily..."

- Migimoto shout but stopped mid-word. He noticed while shouting that encryption is no use to Nia who has omniscient angel like <Rasiel>.

"I see... So you heard everything."

'Well yes. I normally hate spoilers, so I don't really want to use <Rasiel> like this, but I can't really let you play around with Tokiya or my otome heart again.'

- Nia said with a dry smile. Shidou and others sweat at her words. Everyone else also noticed the same thing and say in a small voice,

"...S-She's angry..."

"...Yeah... She seems really mad."

"She sure love that Tokiya character so much~"

- Even though Nia could probably heard these small voice too, she didn't brought them up.

'...Well, looks like you've changed the plan so it's fine. But isn't that plan have a big hole in your assumption?'

"Hole...?"

'Yes — let's take that you can finish writing that manga, why did you talk with an assumption that that I'm going to read it?'

"Na..."

- Shidou widen his eyes but it's as she said. Shidou and others assumed that manga lover like Nia will read it unconditionally. However, that means we only taking advantage of her kindness.

'Isn't it right? My work is super busy. I haven't even read 1% of manga I've read today. There're still a lot of my favorite series that came out while I'm being confined. I don't have free time to read beginner's manga with an impure motive like that. Well... if it was until earlier then I may read it, but I'm in angry mode right now. I can even defeat Ashura. I won't read the book from you that disgrace my Tokiya.'

"B-but...!"

- Yoshino make a face like she is almost crying at Nia's words.

'Un then well bye. That's it! Stop doing something useless!'

"— Wait a minute."

- Before Nia could hang off the phone, Kotori call her to stop.

'Uun...? Ah, you are Kotori-chan? This is the first time we've exchanged words two-side. Hi, nice to meet you.'

"Sure thanks."

- Kotori returned to her and continue,

"— Well then, let get into the main topic. Guessing from the way you speak... if the book is worth reading, then you will find a time to read it?"

'...Un? What are you talking about?'

"Just answer please. If the manga that we wrote has any single thing that is better than yours, then don't you think our manga is worth reading?"

- Nia then laugh at Kotori's words.

'Ahaha! Well, that's the case. But fun or not fun is subjective topic. Even if you said it's fun, do you think I'm going to accept it?'

"It's exactly as you said. ...In that case, how about using an objective standard that nobody can deny?"

'Objective standard...?'

"Yes. — Sales."

'Na...!?'

- It was not Nia who surprised at Kotori's words, but rather everyone in the meeting room.

'Hmp, that's interesting. Do you seriously think you can beat me, Honjou Souji, in sales?'

"Yes. If we won, then you have to read it."

- Nia keep quiet for few seconds before let out a loud 'Ahaha!' laugh.

'That's fine. Try it. If you think you can win.'

- Nia then hang up the phone. The meeting room is covered by a silence for few moments,

"H-hey, Kotori. What are you talking about...? She is a pro mangaka you know?"

"There's no other choice. Because she did declare herself that she won't read."

"Even still..."

- Shidou tried to say something, but Kotori hold up her hand and to stop him.

"Don't worry. It's not like I don't have any plans.

- Kotori said that and raise up the stick of the Chupa Chups in her mouth.



"...Hmp."

- Nia is letting out her breath while lying down on her bed. Even though there's piles of an unread book next to her bed, Nia do not feel like reading them. Nia keep staring at the cieling, while thinking of a cause of her sinking feeling. — Because of the information she gained earlier from <Rasiel> and the words she exchanged with Shidou and his sister on the phone.

"...They sure underestimate me."

- Nia mumbled with a displeased voice. Even though Nia like manga and anime and cannot love anything but 2D, it's not that she is okay with anything that is 2D. This concept is also the common misunderstanding among non-Otaku.

- For example, when a local government try to create a moe anime so that fans come pilgrimage the town. If the show simply rely on moe character that 'Hey, Otaku do like something like this, don't they?' then it won't likely

to work. Otaku likes something that is amusing, not because it's an anime. A back bone is also needed for moe characters.

- Nia think this time is also the same. Even though Nia have Tokiya and other waifu characters (male characters is also waifu), she become to like them because of the excellent personality behind them. It's not like she will go 'Kyun' at any manga characters. Even if they write a manga based on a real person, there is no way her heart would open up for it.

"....."

- Nia then touch the air with her hands. Following that movement, a book — <Rasiel> appeared from nowhere. An angel that could know everything in the world. The best — and at the same time the worst angel of Nia's.

"....."

- Nia stare at the cover of <Rasiel> without opening it. She begin recollecting about a not so distant past. Even though Nia appeared in this world with an angel that knows everything, she do not have any desire nor ambition in particular. She never thought of abusing the power and only want to live peacefully.

- Nia's personality that allow her to talk with anyone help her to come familiar with the society very quickly. Although it couldn't be deny that <Rasiel> also play a part in it. However, one day, Nia become curious.

—How did I was born?

- And that's where everything start collapsing down. If Nia could keep down her curiosity back then and did not open <Rasiel>, then she might become a more sensible Spirit at the moment.

However — Nia got to know it. Got to know why she _become her current self_.

And herself _before that_.

- At the moment Nia got to know that... or more precisely, the moment she _remembered_ that, she let out all the contents of her stomach. And that's when a distrust started sitting in her heart.

- And unlucky for her, in Nia's hands there is an angel that could see everything in the world. Nia started checking each person she knew since she was able to live in the society. A friend, an acquaintance or even a store's staff she usually goes to.

— And Nia became alone.

- The more she knew, the more she dug deeper, the more she couldn't resist the ugliness of humans being. No matter how kind the person is, they always have their true brutal self concealed away. No matter how much love someone says, in the end there is only a negative emotion in their heart. That is when Nia became disgusted with humans.

- However, since Nia is living in a human society, there is no way she could live without coming in contact with anyone. Nia decided to put on a mask. In order to keep playing as normal, she decided to not use <Rasiel> with someone she just met, and interact with everyone like they're a game's NPC.

- Even still, there's one thing she opened her heart to. It is those who live in the 2D world. Manga and anime characters do not have any other sides than what Nia could see. They can't betray Nia.

- Before Nia knew it, she became absorbed into that world. Enough to the point that she decided to become the one who creates those worlds by herself.

- This is why saying that Nia never loves anything but 2D characters is not exactly right. The truth is that Nia cannot open her heart to real humans.

"This is why... it's no use."

- Nia touch <Rasiel> while staring at the ceiling. She only need to wish for it in her head and she can know any information she want to know. For example — what Shidou really said about Nia.

"....."

- Nia choked a little and keep down that curiosity. — She know what's waiting for her is probably not what she wished for. Nia already experienced that several times. However, curiosity only keep coming up and tempting her.

"...No, I should not."

- Nia say to herself and pull her hand back. When Nia let out her breath out of self-loathing, that moment,

"— Ara, ara. You're not going to use that angel?"

- In the room where there's nobody else but Nia, a voice that she never heard before could be heard.

"...! Who!?"

- Nia spring up from the bed and look around the room with caution. A shadow start expanding at one portion of the wall. A girl then appeared from there. A girl with a clock in her left eye. A happening that is like a dream — or a nightmare. If someone like her appear before a normal human, they'd either scream or standing dumbfounded. However Nia is not either. She crouch low and stare at the girl with a cautions looks.

"— So who are you? Don't you think it's rude to enter my room without a knock?"

"Ufufu, I'm truly sorry about that. — Please don't be that cautious. I'm intend to be your ally. At least, for now."

"...Ally?"

- Nia lower her eyelid doubting the girl's story. When Nia twist her left hand, <Rasiel> come to her. For some reason, the girl's eyes is twinkle with interest in what she just done. Nia touch the cover of <Rasiel> and the page started flipping. A letter is faintly lighten up in the page. Nia touch that letter and let out a breath,

"...Hmp, I see. So you are the reason why the transportation plane has no escort. — _Tokisaki Kurumi_."

- Nia called her name in a strong tone like to threatening her. However, the girl did not scare and only make a fierce grin.

"— How wonderful. So that is an omniscient angel <Rasiel>."

"...Oh, I guess you already investigate about me?"

"Yes. Although I only use quantity to let things talk, since I cannot investigate like you do."

- Kurumi smile in amusement. Nia touch <Rasiel> once again out of curiosity of what she just said. Next moment, the meaning of Kurumi's words started popping up in her head.

"...I see, clones. You sure have some troublesome powers."

- Nia sweat while saying that after she got to know about the powerful ability of Kurumi's <Zafkiel>. Nia scream in her head while staring at Kurumi — An angel who control time? Isn't this power a cheat-level...!?

- Even though Nia's <Rasiel> is also powerful, if she were to fight with her one to one, there's no chance that Nia could win. However Nia try to hide her anxiety.

- Although Kurumi's ability to collect information is amazing, there's no way she could know all of <Rasiel>'s abilities. In turn, Nia already know all of <Zafkiel>'s ability. Kurumi also know about the fact that Nia knows. Currently it is Nia who's still one step ahead of her. Nia breath out a sigh and loosen her stiffen body.

"Well then, what is the thing that the worst Spirit-sama want from me?"

"— I only have a simple request. I want you to investigate something."

"...Investigate something, huh."

- Kurumi said her demand while smiling. Heard that, Nia touch her chin to show her allowance.

"Well since you helped me, I want to listen to that request... but it depends on the content. Unlike you, I'm pacifism. I don't plan to leak out a dangerous information."

- Kurumi then giggle at Nia's words.

"Please be reassured. This is just my personal request. I promise there is no chance that the war will begun or some people will be in misfortune because of that information."

"...Hmp?"

- Nia look back at Kurumi with a dubious expression on her face.

"So, please tell me. — The 'first spirit' who appeared in this world 30 years ago. The reason and cause of its appearing, the exact time and coordinate of its appearance, its power — and _a way to kill_ it."

"...Eh?"

- Nia knitted her brows at what Kurumi just said.



"— This room. Please get in."

- Said that, Kotori then unlock the door and urge Shidou and others to get in. It is a room in the first floor of Spirit Mansion next to Itsuka house. Shidou look back and give a nod to the Spirits behind him then turn the doorknob.

- Shidou then remove his shoe and enter the room. The room is about 36 sqm. with a working desk lining up in it. There are drawing material on top of the desk. The room is as if it is an upsized version of Nia's work room, although everything is unused.

- It has been an hour after the meeting. <Ratatoskr> prepared this room within that limited time. Shidou think they're an amazing organization as usual.

"Ooh! This is... amazing!"

"It looks like... a pro's room..."

"Kaka! Looks like you've prepared a place that's worthy of us Yamai's skills."

- The spirits who entered the room also raise up their voice with admiration. Shidou then look at Kotori and say to her,

"...Since you prepared a room like this... so we're really going to do it."

"Really of really. We're going to do it. — Or rather, there's no other ways, isn't it?"

"Well... it might be as you said..."

- Shidou scratch his cheek. Kotori fold her arms and walk to the middle of the room. She then turn to everyone and declare,

"Listen, everyone. The target is 2 days from now. In the last day of Comic Colosseum where Nia will be participating as a Circle."

- Kotori open her arms and continue,

"— That day, we'll be _open a booth next to Nia's booth, prepare our books in the same quantity as Nia's books, and finish selling all of it before Nia._"

- The spirits then raise a "Ohh" voice at Kotori's words. This is Kotori's plan she mentioned earlier.

"However, we don't have that much time. For the background or the finishing, we can let <Ratatoskr> to handle that. But if we let them handle everything, we can't say we made the book by ourselves anymore. The story and the drawing of main characters must be done by ourselves. I've already prepared a printing house. In the worst case we must finish the book by 3 AM of 31th."

"But... are you sure that's going to work? The other side is pro mangaka you know?"

"Well, I don't think it's going to be that simple. But if we're going to fight with her on a commercial scene, then our chance is even lower. For doujinshi, there's a limit on the quantity you can bought in, so that's our only place we can fight her. — Also, we don't have to think too much about number of pages in case of doujinshi."

"That's true... let's say we could finish selling before Nia, how can we be sure that she's going to acknowledge her defeat...?"

"That depends on her pride and how we negotiate with her. I think there's a high chance that she will do, since the penalty is only to read the book that we wrote."

"...Then the problem is"

- Shidou makes a serious face. Kotori nods back to him.

"Yes. The problem is how will we make a doujinshi that strikes Nia's heart.
— And how will we sell it quicker than Nia."

- Kotori said that and walks to the whiteboard inside the room.

"— So let's decide each person's role. Given that we will do the story together, the problem would be the drawing. Let me ask, has anyone here ever drawn manga or illustrations?"

- Kaguya, Yuzuru and ex-humans Origami and Miku raise up their hands.

"Well, that's what I guessed. ...Let's first measure the drawing ability of each one. Everyone, can you sit on the desk you like and start drawing Shidou?"

"Ooh! So I have to draw Shidou. Leave it to me!"

"Fufun. Well fine. Let me show you my fine skills."

"Consent. Shidou, can you sit there?"

"Darling~ please look at me. Here~!"

"....."

- The spirits sat down on the chairs and started drawing to the paper in front of them.

"Mine is... also finished."

- Heard Kotori's voice, Tohka and Yoshino show their drawings to everyone. You could say it's a cute drawing... although it's more of a drawing drawn by an elementary school student.

"I see... yes, it's cute."

"Really!?"

"Yes. But unfortunately we can't use it for this doujinshi."

"I-I'm sorry..."

- Yoshino hunched her shoulder. Shidou pat her on the head while making a wry smile.

"Well, next. Here's mine."

"Ah~ I'll show mine too~ Here~!"

- Even though Kotori and Miku's drawings is few steps above Tohka and Yoshino in term of age range, even though they're cute, rather than a manga their drawing is more of an illustration that middle-high school girls usually draw in their notebook.

- However, for some reason, even though Miku is supposed to draw Shidou, her drawing has him with a long hair and wearing a skirt...

"...Um, Miku?"

"Yes~, what is it, darling~?"

"...Er, nothing. Let's move to the next."

- Shidou feel a fear at the glittering in Miku's eyes and avert his eyes away. If Shidou said anything more, then the reality is likely be forced to match her illustration.

"Kukuku... well then the next is us."

"Presentation. Please have a look."

- Yamai sisters then show their drawings full of confidence.

"Ohh!?"

- Shidou widen his eyes at their drawings. As expected from those two who did an illustration match, Kaguya and Yuzuru's drawings are miles ahead of the previous four. Although there's still few places where the drawing is poor, their drawing could very well work as a manga.

- What Kaguya draw is a shonen manga-style hot-blooded Shidou, while Yuzuru draw a shoujo manga-style handsome Shidou.

"You two sure is amazing."

"Kakaka! Of course!"

"Agreement. There's nothing us Yamai can't do."

- They both said with a confident voice. Kotori look at their drawing and put her hand on her chin. She then look at Shidou and Origami and continue,

"Looks like the main artist candidate for now is Yamai sisters. — Well then, next."

"Y-Yeah..."

"Sure."

- Shidou and Origami then show their drawings to everyone.

"Fumufumu, even though it's not as good as Yamai sisters', Shidou's drawing is also not bad. For Origami... hyaa!?"



- Kotori scream when she saw Origami's drawing. Origami's drawing looks very realistic and very well drawn... but for some reason she draws Shidou without any clothes on, and nude Origami intertwining him.

"N... what!?"

"...!"

- Other spirits also choked. Only Yuzuru and Kaguya loosen their cheek and look at it with a glittering eyes.

"W-What did you draw, Origami!"

"Shidou. — That became one with me."

"Why did you add something unnecessary!?"

- Kotori raise up her voice and turn back Origami's illustration.

"Geez... since your drawing is very well done, I'm going to put you in the candidate, but please don't do this when we actually doing it...!"

"I can't understand. If you want the doujinshi to sell well, doing an Adult Only book is unavoidable."

"Our booth is in the 'Creative Work - General' zone!"

- Kotori raise her voice and let out a breath like she's tired.

"Er... I guess this is all? Then..."

"U-um..."

- Before Kotori could finish her words, Yoshino raise up her hand.

"You still haven't looked at Natsumi-san's drawing..."

"...! Ah, no, I..."

- Natsumi shake her shoulders at Yoshino's words and hide her paper behind her.

"Ah, that's right. I'm sorry. Natsumi, can you show me?"

"...W-well, fine. But it's not that good. You can just let Kaguya or Yuzuru or Shidou or Origami do it."

"Since you've already drawn one, then please show us. Here."

"...Uuu, um, it's really badly drawn so don't have any expectation?"

"It's fine. Mine is also not that good."

"I'm also very sleepy and not feeling very well today. And it has been a while since I grip a pen..."

"I understand"

"And to tell you the truth I was very hesitant with the pose so I only have 10 minutes to draw it. It has been a while since I draw something, and lately I don't have enough sleep, my body also isn't in the best condition..."

"Ah, I understand just show me already!"

- Kotori raise up her voice and snatch the paper from Natsumi's hands. She look at her drawing — and widen her eyes.

"Eh... this is..."

"A-amazing..."

"Seriously...?"

- Everyone open their mouth in astonishment. Natsumi's drawing is no way inferior to the drawing of a pro mangaka.

"Isn't this amazing, Natsumi. I never knew you have such special skill!"

"...No, special skill or rather... in the past, I've gotten interested and tried 'mimicing' a mangaka..."

"Ah..."

- Shidou widen his eyes at Natsumi's words. He remembered that Natsumi is very talented in observing and mimicing other people. When Natsumi transform into other person with <Hanniel>, she could trace a person's actions to the point that even the person's close friend can't easily tell them apart.

"— It's decided"

- Kotori said that and let out her breath.

"Main artist is Natsumi. Support is Yamai sisters, Shidou and Origami."

- Heard that, all spirits nod in agreement.

"Umu. I agree."

"That's amazing... Natsumi-san"

"I don't have any objections."

"Hmp, well fine. This time I'll let you take the prize."

"Approval. I will let you be the highlight."

"Kya~! Natsumi-san, can you write a love story between me and darling later~?"

"Eh... eh?"

- Natsumi blink her eyes in surprise at everyone's voice. Shidou grasp Natsumi's hand.

"Please, Natsumi. — Please lend me your power to save Nia."

"Eh—!?"

- Shidou said so with a serious face, Natsumi think for a second and,

".....D-don't complain about it later."

- Said so in an embarrassed tone. All other spirits then clap their hands in order to celebrate her. Natsumi's face turn even more red and hang her head down. That is when Tohka noticed something,

"By the way, Kotori. What should we do?"

"Now that you mentioned it~. Ah! Maybe we will give everyone a massage when everyone's tired, and sing a lullaby while sleeping together~!?"

- Miku twist her body and said so with glittery in her eyes. Natsumi went "Hiii" and choked and escape behind Shidou.

"Nope. I have something else for everyone to do. — In a way, it could be said this is even more important mission than drawing a manga."

- Kotori answered back to them with a shrug. Miku, Tohka and Yoshino then look at each other and incline their head.

"Important mission...?"

"I wonder what is it~?"

"It's something for you to look forward to. — More importantly, everyone let's start thinking about the story."

"Nu? Are we not going to write about Shido?"

"That would be the case. But we have pages limit, and even though we've got <Ratatoskr>'s support, the most we can do is about 64 pages minus 4 pages cover and one page imprint, total of 59 pages. We have to fit the story within that limit and make Nia able to love the 'Shidou' character within that story."

"Muu... I see. It sounds difficult."

- Tohka make a difficult face and fold her arms. Kotori then walk to the back of the room to the whiteboard.

"That's why, let's discuss about it with everyone. Then we create a rough drawing within today, and tomorrow let's finish the drawing."

"...Looking at it again, this looks like some pretty absurd scheduling... are you sure it can be finished?"

"There's no choice other than finish it."

- Kotori take off the whiteboard pen's cap and write 'Shidou Doujinshi Project' on the whiteboard. She then look at everyone and declare,

'Well then, — Let's our manuscript<date> commerce.'

Chapter 4 - If you give up now, the deadline is already over .

- On the rooftop of Honjou Nia's mansion, Kurumi raise up from the shadow. She stretch her body and look up to the sky. After that, a familiar voice is then heard from a shadow in her surroundings.

"— Well, well."

"Looks like we're in trouble."

"How was it?"

- The clones then started appearing on the rooftop. Kurumi let out her breath and response to them. "Yes," — Even though Kurumi could gain the information about the 'first spirit' from the second spirit she had been looking for for so long, that information make her to come to certain conclusion. Kurumi let out her breath and shrug her shoulders,

"Even if I collect the spirit power and go back 30 years with <Yud Bet> — there is no way I can defeat 'the first spirit.'"

'.....'

- Heard that, the clones who were noisy suddenly become quiet. Everyone make a serious looks and look at Kurumi,

"— Ara?"

- Kurumi looked at them and giggled.

"What's with that face of us? — Do you really think I'd give up just for that? Do you really think I'm going to waste all the lives that I took all these years?"

- Kurumi said and dance on the rooftop to the fence. She look down to the town and continue,

"It's true that 'the first spirit' is very powerful. — But what about it? My <Zafkiel> is the strongest angel that could control time. Before time, any power is meaningless."

- Kurumi look back to her clones behind her. The most important information she gained from Nia is not about the power of 'the first spirit' — but rather the reason it appeared and the cause.

"It is very simple. 'The first spirit' didn't existed in this world until 30 years ago. Then I only need to go back to before the first spirit appear, and eliminate the very cause that make it appeared."

- Kurumi then make her hand into a shape of guns and shoot it to nothing. Clones of Kurumi become roused to what Kurumi just said.

"— Well, even though I can't deny it's unfortunate that I'm unable to defeat that spirit with my own hands. But let's put that aside."

- What's more important is to remove the existence of 'Spirit' from this world. To return the world back to how it should be, like what Shidou did before. Kurumi lower her eyes at her new resolve and grip her hands tight.

"Even still..."

- She then sigh. Kurumi keep thinking back about the reason of 'first spirit's appearance in her head that Nia told her. She then let out an appalled voice,

"Isaac Ray Pelham Westcott, Ellen Mira Mathers, and — Eliot Baldwin Woodman."

- She said the names of three biggest sinners.

"Although it is no use saying it now... but the next time I meet you, I will likely be unable to stell my urge to kill them."

- Kurumi spit those words out and kicked the fence. She is then absorbed to the ground.



- And then the battlefield has begun for Shidou and others. After they decided on the story, Shidou and spirits are then splitted into the drawing team and special team. For the drawing team, at first Natsumi will be in charge of rough drawing, draft and drawing of the cover.

- Even though Shidou and others want to help her out a bit more, there is no other choice. Unless those tasks are done by one person, there will be an inconsistency in the story and direction.

- While Natsumi is doing her job, Shidou and others who are free watch a video explaining about manga drawing and doing a drawing pratice. Once everything above is done when the clock ticks to 2 AM of 30th.

- Even though it might be a better idea for everyone to take a sleep and start working in early morning, Natsumi advice everyone to continue the work. Shidou and others then start working overnight and take a nap in turns to maximize the efficiency.

- The work started by drawing a frame and speaking balloon with ruler and pen. Once those are done, it's time for the real work. For everyone to ink the rough drawing that Natsumi draw. However,



"...Ouch, I draw off the frame!"

"Ku... the deep-black tear just dropped over the pure white holy ground!?"

"Disturbance. The ink just got under the ruler."

"...No problem. That is still fixable."

- Even though Shidou and others have drawn an illustration before, it's no change that they're an amateur. There's no way they could do the manuscript tidily since the start.

- However, with enough concentration and ability to adapt the situation, by staring at the rough drawing like they're going to make a hole on it and being very careful, they could be able properly inking the manuscript. Though Yuzuru and Kaguya give up the dip pen midway and switched to marker pen for a very detailed parts.

- And once the inking for each page is done, the next is to erase the pencil traces. Then scan the manuscript and send it to assistant team lead by Nakatsugawa. Even though it is a very rush work done by sheer force of numbers. If they don't do this then there's no way they could finish a volume of manga within 2 days.

- However that doesn't mean Shidou and others will quickly get better at drawing. The inking has become a very stressful operation for everyone.

""

""

""

- A sound of a pen grazing on a paper echoed in the room. Even though they also open some music as a BGM, nobody in the room is being saved by that BGM. Sometimes after the operation begins, Kotori open the room and bring in a bag of refreshments in both of her hand.

"Hi everyone, is everything going well?"

"...Ah, Kotori. Yeah, somehow."

"...You suddenly looked old even though it was just few hours."

"....."

- Kotori sweat on her cheek and put the bag on the table.

"Refreshments. I'm putting it here, so please eat it when you're taking a break."

"Kaka... an offering huh. Thanks for you goodwill."

"Gratitude. Thank you, Kotori."

"....."

- Yamai sisters thanked Kotori. Origami only wave her hand to her without saying anything. Natsumi only reply back as ".....uu". Once Kotori see everyone's reaction, she then walk to Shidou.

"...Shidou, can I have a moment?"

"Nn? What is it?"

"A little, About Nia."

"...! Did something happened?"

- Kotori nodded at Shidou and tell everyone,

"Sorry, everyone. I'm going to borrow Shidou for a little. I'll make him work two times faster when he's back."

"Hey!?"

- Shidou raised up his voice but Kotori didn't care. She then pull Shidou's sleeve and walk out of the room and leave the mansion. Shidou is dazzled by the sunlight outside.

"Ugh... it's already this bright outside. This is bad. How many hours left?"

"Even though manuscript is important, but first get into the car."

- Kotori then point Shidou to the car in front of the mansion. Shidou sit at the back seat as instructed by Kotori. The car then start moving along the road.

"And..."

- Shidou let out his question,

"What did you know about Nia?"

"Yes — actually, we just got a contact with Nia's mangaka acquaintance."

"R-Really!? Then we can ask that person —"

"Yes. We might get some hint about Nia's past."

- Kotori said while looking at Shidou. Shidou gulped down his saliva. About 20 minutes of travelling, the car stop in front of a cafe.

"— Here, please get off. Reine is already talking with that person inside."

"S-Sure."

- Shidou get off the car while feeling a little tensed. He then walk into the cafe. Shidou look around inside the cafe and notice Reine who is holding up her hand calling Shidou.

"Hi, Reine-san."

"I'm sorry to keep you waiting."

"...Ah, you've come. Shin, Kotori."

- Reine said in a sleepy voice and introduce them to the person sitting on the opposite seat.

"...Let me introduce. This is Takajou Hiroki-sensei, a mangaka."

"Ah, nice to meet you—"

- Shidou tried to bow to the person but stopped beforehand. Even though Hiroki name sounds like a male name, the person in front of him is a woman wearing a thick glasses looking to be about latter half of her twenties.

- Shidou then remembered. 'Other Fake's Takajou Hiroki. The person that Nia said she is a woman mangaka who is using a male pen name like her.

"It's nice to meet you. I'm Itsuka Shidou."

"Same. I am Kotori. Thank you for taking your time to come here."

"Oh, thanks for the courtesy."

- Takajou said that then put her hands on the table and bow back to them. After that, she look up to Shidou and Kotori and ask,

"...So, I heard you want to hear about Honjou-sensei?"

"Ah — yes. Anything is fine, can you tell us what you know?"

- Shidou answered. Takajou then fix the position of her glasses,

"I don't mind doing so. — But what is your relation with Honjou-sensei?"

"Eh?"

"Ah sorry. But we're in the career of our popularities. I cannot leak the information randomly to someone."

"I see..."

- Shidou consent with her reasoning. However he couldn't come up with a good explanation right away. He tried to come up with something for a moment, but Kotori next to him is raising up her voice,

"— Actually, we're a distant relative with _Nia-onee-chan_. We couldn't get contact with her since few years ago... so we're asking around about her circumstances."

- And said those words. Shidou don't know if Kotori prepared the answer beforehand or it is just an ad-lib she came up just now. But either way, Shidou found a hidden talent as a swindler from Kotori who just said those words without changing her expression.

"Fumu, I see."

- Takajou groan a little before she nodded. She believe in what Kotori said since she used the name 'Nia' that isn't known to public.

"I understand your situation now. I'm also worrying about Honjou-sensei. Please let me cooperate with you."

"Really!? Thank you very much...!"

- Shidou bow to her. However Takajou then scratch her cheek,

"But even still... I still don't know how much I'll be of help."

"What do you mean..."

"No, to tell you the truth, I haven't met with Honjou-sensei for few years already. And... looks like Honjou-sensei also hates me..."

"Eh? What do you mean?"

"Well... I first met with Honjou-sensei about 8 or 9 years ago at the party held by the publisher. We became closed since then... but one day she began taking a cold attitude and start keeping distance from me... I thought we were good friends... but looks like that carelessness of me did something rude to her without realizing."

"That is..."

- Shidou knitted his eyebrows at what Takajou said. Kotori next to him also making the same expression. Just like Shidou — Kotori probably noticed it as well. About the angel <Rasiel>.

"Yes?"

- Noticing Shidou and Kotori's reaction, Takajou incline her head in wonder.

"U-um, nothing."

"Fumu... is that so. — Anyway, that's the reason. I can tell you what I know, but I'm not sure if it'll be useful."

"Yes, please do."

- Shidou said while nodding to her. Takajou then nod to him and continue the story.

- About 40 minutes after that. Shidou and Kotori thanked Takajou for her time and leave the cafe back to the car. The information they gain from

Takajou — it seems that Nia has a good personality that could talk and get along with everyone.

- However Nia don't like to say anything about herself before she became a mangaka. Whenever someone bring up a topic of her past friendship relation, Nia always try to smooth over the discussion. And when someone like Takajou who can be a good friend with her appeared, she keep a distance from her in turn.

"...What do you think, Kotori?"

"There's no doubt <Rasiel> play a part in this. ...It's not strange to think about it. If someone has an angel that know everything in the world, there's no doubt that person will at least investigate about others."

"I agree... but"

"Yes. Because of that, Nia become distrust of humans. — But even if that is the case, there's no one who could act like a saint for the whole day and night. Everyone will at least talking behind the back, or do some bad thing when there's nobody around. With <Rasiel> then it isn't strange to feel humans are disgusting."

- Kotori scratch her head,

"...Looks like the problem is deeply rooted. I thought what was she joking around when I heard she can't love anything but 2D... but isn't that means she can only open her heart to something that won't ever betray her? Isn't that... too sad?"

"....."

- Shidou keep quiet at Kotori's words. It's as she said. The reason Nia don't want to talk about friendship relation with someone, the reason she is absorbed into 2D. That is probably the reason. However, Shidou feel a little strange at the reason Nia start keeping distance from Takajou.

"..., Shidou?"

"Eh? Ah..."

- Shidou answered back. Kotori look at him with a displeased face.

"I know you're sleepy, but this is important matter. Can you not just spaced-out?"

"Ah... sorry.

- Shidou answered back and gripped his fist tight.

"Anyway — for now let's focus on finishing the doujinshi. No matter what we will do, we have to at least be able to talk to her."

- Shidou said that. Kotori make a surprised face at his words and nodded back to him.



- 31 December at 1 AM. The work in the spirit mansion has reached its climax. Shidou and others are still continue to ink the manuscript with vacant eyes.

"....."

- Shidou continue to ink the character that Natsumi draw with uttermost careful. He is wearing a glove with fingers out on his hand. Shidou has a cold sheet placed on his forehead to keep him from sleeping. There's also empty

bottle and empty can of energy drink and coffee lined up in the corner of the table.

"...1 AM... considering we have to upload the data for the finishing... now is almost... our time limit..."

"...Ui..."

"Ans... wer. Only a little bit more..."

"....."

- It has been a day since they've started. Shidou never leave the seat except for food or toilet or taking a nap. Doing a continuous tensed work like this do worn off Shidou's mental faster than expected.

- It's not Shidou alone who's in this condition. Kaguya and Yuzuru is also the same. Or even Origami who keep acting like nothing also sometimes completely stopped moving every few hours like she ran out of battery.

- However, the one in most critical condition in this room is no doubt Natsumi. She is sitting at the desk in the back of the room. Natsumi did not take a nap even once since the start. Her eyes is bloodshot. Her fingers keep shaking.

- Even though Shidou and others tell her to take a rest, Natsumi did not put down her pen even once. Her looks has turned her from a girl to a pro. Seeing her looks, Shidou also can't complain. He squeeze up last bit of his vigor and work on the last part.

"Okay... now mine is... done."

- Shidou let out a shaking voice and collapsed to the desk (after put aside the manuscript). Yamai sisters and Origami also finished they work not before long. Yamai collapsed to the desk just like Shidou. Origami completely stopped moving while sitting.

- After this is to wait for the ink to dry and erase the pencil traces then scan it to the assistant team. It should be okay to leave everything to <Ratatoskr> from now on. That moment, Kotori and others who belongs to other team open the room and come in, holding a cardboard box within their hands.

"...Here, Shidou."

"Ah, Kotori... Huh?"

- Shidou look at Kotori and widen his tired eyes. Kotori, Tohka, Yoshino and Miku who entered the room also looks sleepy like Shidou.

"You all... what happened with that face?"

- The girls look at each other and look back to Shidou,

"That is a secret, Shido."

"Please look forward... to it."

"Ufufu... even though lack of sleep is an enemy to beauty, but I can't let only darling and others to do all the work~"

- Said that, Tohka, Yoshino and Miku then laugh in a exhausted face. Shidou incline his head in wonders.

"Well then, how about the work?"

"Ah... mine just finished earlier. What's left is the erase the pencil trace and send it to assistant team. Kaguya, Yuzuru and Origami is probably done too."

"I see. Thank you for your hard work. What's left is —"

- Kotori then look at the girl who's still working — Natsumi. Shidou sleep on the table for few seconds before he stand up and walk to Natsumi along with Kotori and others. Seeing that, Yamai sisters and Origami also follow them.

"Natsumi...? Are you okay?"

"....."

"Natsumi?"

"...! A-ah... Yes..."

- Natsumi shook her shoulder and raise up her exhausted face. Her eye is completely red with a dark circles under it. No matter how you looks, Natsumi is already at her limits.

"Our work is already done, let's change. You're tired, don't you? Please sleep."

"...No, it's okay. I only have a little left..."

- Natsumi shake her head left and right and continue her work. She rubbed her eyes and dirt her face with the ink.

"Only a little... even if you said so, you haven't taken any sleep since yesterday. You also did the most work out of us all with the rough drawing and draft..."

"That's right. The match begins in the event. Leave everything to us and lend yourself to the temptation of darkness sleep."

"Agreement. You worked too much, Natsumi."

"Resting is also a work."

- Even Yamai sisters and Origami said that, Natsumi do not shows any sign of stopping her work. She stares at the manuscript with a vacant eye and continue moving the pen.

"...I'm... fine..."

"B-But..."

- Shidou said that. Natsumi continue while drawing lines on the paper,

"...I... probably won't be much use in the event... this is the only thing I can do. So... please let me do it.... I never thought... I could be needed by everyone... this much. Even me... want to be everyone's help..."

"Natsumi..."

"...I... was happy... to be saved by Shidou... and everyone... and this time... I can lend my power... to help other spirit. I'm very... very happy... about that. That's why... I don't think this is painful at all.... It's fun really fun that I can't help myself... I want to let that stubborn Nia to know it to..."

- Natsumi smiled a little and raise up her hand that is gripping the pen.

"— that friendship — is wonderful..."

- Natsumi then draw the last line and collapsed down from the chair. Shidou could catch her body before she falls down.

"Hey, Natsumi. Are you okay!?"

"....."

- Shidou asked back with a worried voice. Natsumi only answer him with a sleeping breath.

"You sure worked hard, Natsumi."

- Shidou then pat Natsumi on her head with a smile. Miku who stand behind Shidou then raise up her voice with tears in her eyes.

"Uu...! I'm moved by it! Darling, please let me bring Natsumi-san to the room to sleep..."

"Shidou, take Natsumi to her room. Don't forgot to lock the door."

- Kotori interrupted Miku's words. Miku twisted her body. "Aaan~ Kotori-san a meanie..." she said but Kotori don't take notice. She then take the manuscript from Natsumi's desk and nod,

"— Splendid."

- She then look at everyone.

"This is the result of Natsumi's soul. Now our weapon is completed. — Everyone, let's win this battle."

'Ooh!'

- Everyone raise up their fist at Kotori's words.



- And then the morning comes. 7:30 AM in the morning. The door to the battlefield has opened. The circle participants are rushing into the Tenguu

Square where Comic Colosseum is being held. The quiet hall is now full of the sound of footsteps and carry cart.

- One hour after the door opened, when the wave of circle participant has calmed down, Shidou and others — circle <Ratatoskr> is then arrived at the front of the entrance gate.

"Okay... let's go, everyone."

"Umu, we're well prepared!"

"I-I'll try my best...!"

- Spirits nod at Shidou's voice. Even though everyone is not in the perfect condition, their stamina has recovered a little thanks to the sleep they've taken after finishing the manuscript.

- When Shidou woke up, Origami was clinging to him. Also Miku also catch Yoshino and Kotori in her arms and sleep with a happy looks. Yoshino and Kotori on the other hand groan like they were having a nightmare. Origami and Miku denied that they do anything.

- Whatever it is, now is the time for the final battle. Shidou brought along the spirits to the booth. The hall is full of circle participants who is setting up their booth.

"Whoa... even though it's my first time, but this is amazing."

"Agreement. Everyone is being creative."

"I agree~. This atmosphere. It's almost like the time before concert~"

- The spirits look around the hall and exchange their words. Once the wall of the hall could be seen, Kotori raise up her voice.

"— She's here. That's Nia."

- Heard that, the spirits then become alerted. Shidou gulped down his saliva and look at the booth. Over there, Nia is preparing her booth with few of her staff.

"....."

- Shidou make up his mind and walk to her. Noticing shidou, Nia then raise up her face. "...Un?" Nia push her glasses up and stand.

"What a coincidence, Boy. I didn't thought I'd see you here. Oh, there's everyone else too. I guess this is the first time I've met with most of you?"

- Nia look at the spirits behind Shidou. Tohka, Origami, Kaguya and Natsumi put on their guard, while Yoshino and Yuzuru bow back to her. Kotori only fold her arms and look back at Nia. Miku, on the other hand, put her hands on her chin with a glittery eyes. "I see I see... a slender girl in glasses is also quite good... this is the type I have never seen before..." she mumbled. Natsumi keep her distance from Miku.

"...Then? What are you doing here? Well it's free for you to come to Comico, but normal participants can enter the hall at 10 AM, you know?"

- Nia shrugged. Kotori then unfold her arms,

"Thanks for your advice — But we're not here as a normal participants."

- Kotori then show the booth next to Nia. Nia follow where she is pointing to and make a dubious looks,

"Hmp...? Ah, I see."

- Nia let out her breath and take the hall map.

"And I thought it was strange. In the map, there wasn't supposed to be a booth here, but it's here when I came here. At first I thought it was management's mistake... but I see, so it's your people's doings."

"Well... that's the case."

- Shidou answered. Nia then look at Shidou and others with an expression like she found them unpleasant while enjoying the unexpected situation at the same time.

"...But you sure brought a lot of people here."

"Ara, you also has few."

"Yeah, everyone is just a part-time. Isn't employee and employer relationship good? They will work for the amount I pay. How easy to understand it is."

"....."

- Shidou and Kotori bite their lips at her words. — The words they exchanged with Takajou yesterday came to their mind.

"Then? It's okay if you participate, but what are you selling? From the look of it, you didn't bring anything with you."

"Yes."

- Kotori then snapped her fingers. As if to response with her command, three man pushing carts full of cardboard boxes then appeared from the service entrance. — They are <Fraxinus> crew Nakatsugawa, Kawagoe and Migimoto.

"— I'm here to deliver the items for circle <Ratatoskr>!"

"Thank you. Please put it at the booth over there."

"Sure!"

- The crew then stack the cardboard boxes inside the booth. There are 10 boxes in total, the same amount as what Nia has in her booth.

"10 boxes with 500 copies each... it should be the same amount as you, Nia."

"...Ho? You sure do a research. So you're saying you will try to sell out faster than me? That's a nice plan. If that's the case, it could be say your sales is better than mine."

"Thanks for the quick understanding."

- Kotori lift up the tip of her lips at Nia's words. At the same moment, the circle participants who are setting up their booth nearby also start whispering something. Shidou thought they feel the threatening atmosphere from the booth — but that's not the case. They're looking at Nakatsugawa who is working on the setup.

"Hey, could that be..."

"Yeah, that man with glasses and a glove. No doubt that he is that legendary circle <Mai Mai Kaburi>'s representative MUNECHIKA...!"

"Seriously!? The man that disappeared from Comico five years ago after releasing 'Should the lispy young sister call me Onii-tan or Onii-tama' due to difference in focus caused his circle to break up. That man...!?"

- Or so the whisper is heard. Shidou and Kotori look at Nakatsugawa while lowering their eyelid by half.

"<Mai Mai Kaburi>...?"

"MUNECHIKA...?"

"Please stop. It's story of the past."

"....."

- Nakatsugawa answered them while smiling nihilisticly. Shidou and Kotori look at each other and decide to not continue this topic.

"Before that, Shidou."

"Ah, yeah..."

- Shidou walk to the back of his booth and take out a book from the cardboard box. The book is still warm since it is freshly printed. This is also the first time Shidou have seen the finished book. The line drawing that Natsumi draw is now painted with colors with a logo on it. It sure doesn't looked like the book was done in just 2 days.

- Shidou turn his body toward Nia and look into her eyes. He then correct his posture and hand over her the book.

"— It is pleasure to be here today. I'm Itsuka Shidou from circle <Ratatoskr>."

".....!"

- Nia moved her eyebrows a little at what Shidou just said. After few seconds of hesitant, Nia then take a book from her desk and hand it to Shidou.

"— Honjou Souji from circle <Honjou-dou>. Nice to meet you today."

- They then bow to each other and exchanged their books. It's a custom to exchange the book with the circle next to you like this. Nia then make a bitter face and continue,

"...I don't want to be rude, so I'm accepting it for now. But for me to read it or not depends on today's result."

"Sure. I don't mind. — Let's make today a good day for both of us."

"....."

- Shidou lend out his hand. Nia breath out a sigh and shake his hands few times before releasing.

"Even though your plan looks interesting, I don't think you have any chance to win. At very least, I'm a pro, and even with these 5000 copies, I'm already being modest about the number since this is my first event in a while. It's not easy for a new circle like you to win with a rushed works by amateur."

"Well... I wonder about that."

- Kotori make a bold smile and look at the spirits behind her.

"— Everyone, let's start preparing."

- And to answer to her, Tohka, Yoshino and Miku raise up an "Ooh!" voice. However Yamai sister, Origami and Natsumi, the drawing group do not have any idea what Kotori is talking about.

"Preparation...? What is that?"

"Question. Yuzuru never hear anything about it."

"...I have a bad feeling about it."

"Anyway, anyway. Just come over here. — Shidou, I'll be back soon. Can you continue setting up the booth with Kawagoe and others?"

- Kotori said that while pushing Natsumi's back. Shidou nod to her in understanding even though he still have question in his head.

"Well... let's start setting up the booth."

- The crew nod to Shidou's words and bring a cardboard box into the booth. Inside the box, there is a tablecloth, a poster with the cover illustration and few other booth decoration.

"Whoa, amazing. You even prepared these?"

"Fufufu... of course. We're a no-name circle. We need to be stand out at very least. Good thing that we're a wall circle that everyone is yearning for. Then it make sense to use the wall to its use."

- Nakatsugawa lifted up his glasses and said so. Shidou make a wry smile at his words. Shidou then help putting the poster up on the wall with Migimoto, while feeling embarassed at the illustration that resembles him. Shidou shake his head to clear that feeling.

- After some times passed, Shidou noticed some people are gathering near the wall. Those people then start lining up to a booth — Especially for Nia's booth, which has quite number of people lining up.

"Huh...? It still isn't an opening time. What are those people..."

"Ah, they're the same circle participants like us. Anyone who has a circle ticket and get into the hall earlier than normal participants. So they can line up to the booth early like this."

"Eh, is that a good thing to do?"

"Hmm... it's hard for me to say it."

- Nakatsugawa fold his arms and answer vaguely. Shidou could take his expression as 'Strictly speaking, it's not a good thing. But I also do it in the past...'.
 ~~~~~

"Eh... but, that means..."

"Rite, you get it now?"

- It is Nia from the next booth who answered him.

"The initial sales of doujinshi depends on a good reputation. Even though didn't participate in few years, and it was in hurry so my booth didn't get printed on the catalogue, but I announced about it in my own blog since a while ago. So there are participants who want to get my book before anything else."

- Said that, Nia then look at Shidou from the top of her glasses frame.

"So I'm sorry to say the result of who going to sell faster has been decided from the start."

"That — couldn't be..."

"— Do you really think so?"

- Shidou's voice is then interrupted with Kotori's voice. Heard that, Shidou look at the direction and, "Kotori?" ...Eeeh!?" widen his eyes in surprise. The spirits in bunny girl costume could be seen over there.

"Y-you all, what's with that costume..."

"Umu! Looks like we'll be selling the book!"

"We... made it... yesterday...! It's a little... embarrassing... but I'll work hard...!"

- Tohka and Yoshino answered Shidou's question. Shidou then realized what Tohka and others in the special team were doing. The participants nearby the booth then start making a noise.

"What's with that circle... they're sure full of cuties"

"Eh? That one wasn't in the catalogue"

"But isn't that Izayoi Miku?"

- The buzz is then getting wider when someone noticed Izayoi Miku. A sound of shutter could be heard from everywhere. Even though it's bad manner to take photo without permission, but Miku do not care. Or even, she make a pose to a girl who is taking her picture.

"...Izayoi Miku?"

"Ufufu~ So you found out~"

- Saw that, Nia inclined her head. Miku answer to her in proud tone but Nia only make a dubious face.

"...Sorry, I don't know. What is she up to?"

"Auu!?"

- Miku staggered when she hard Nia's words.

"C-Calm down Miku. Nia was captured by DEM until a little while ago. It isn't strange that she don't know about an artist."

"Y-You're right~ ... Thank you, darling"

"Straighten up. It will begin soon."

- Miku laugh a little before correcting her posture. Kotori pat her on her back. At the same moment, the clock ticks to 10 AM and the announce to begin the event is heard in the hall along with a thunderous applause.

- Shidou and the spirits widen their eyes at the applause. But that is only the beginning. Before the applause stop, a sound of ground rumbling and is then heard from a distance along with a little tremble.

"T-This sound is..."

- Shidou shaken his voice before he notice this is the sound of footsteps from normal participants who are running to the hall.

"O-Ooh...!?"

"...Amazing, what is that."

- The spirits widen their eyes dumbfounding at the participants who are rushing inside the hall. The circle participants who lined up earlier to Nia's booth then start buying her book.

"New volume please."

"Sure, it is 500 yen."

"Two copies please!"

"It is 1000 Yen."

- Nia and her staff start selling their books in an accustomed manner. Nia glanced at Shidou for a second and twist her lips as if she is saying 'if you can beat me, then try.'

"Ku — We have to start too!"

"That's right. Then everyone, let's do as planned!"

'Ooh!'

- The spirits then stand in front of the booth. Seeing their appearance, the participants who finished buying the book they want start stopping their feet at the front the booth.

"Ooh, welcome!"

- Tohka call a boy were looking at the cover while passing by. The boy shake his shoulder in surprise.





"Um, well..."

"It is 500 yen for single copy! How about it!?"

"...Er, um, then a copy please."

- The boy were hesitant whether to buy the book or not, but he is defeated at shining smile of Tohka. He make a wry smile and hand her a 1000 Yen note.

"Ooh, thank you! Here's 500 Yen, the change!"

- Tohka hand the boy a book and a change and shake the boy's hand. The boy feel a little embarrassed — but also somewhat happy — and wave his hand before he leave the booth. Looking at the happening, Shidou make a wry smile.

"Haha... I guess this is okay too...?"

"Of course. Since this is a contest of who is selling faster. No matter what you wrote, there's no guarantee that it will sell. This is where advertisement and expansion ability become a big factor. Honjou-sensei probably understand that point herself. — Or rather, unless we do this, there's no way a no-name circle could sell 5000 copies."

"I-I see..."

- Shidou nodded while sweating on his cheek. Even though it is a market of self-publishing books, a market is still a market.

- The tactic of circle <Ratatoskr> is to have cute girls promoting the book to make people gathering in front of the booth, then use the smile of spirits to knock them off. Even though it may considered a foul play, they could get the book to sale steadily.

- However, <Honjou-dou> next to them already sell several times more than <Ratatoskr> even without those tactics. The more the time passed, the longer the line to buy Nia's book is. If this continues, no doubt she would easily overrun them.

"Ku... if this continues..."

- The pacing is too different. Shidou twisted his face into a grimace while looking at Nia's books that are selling in fast pacing. Kotori in a cute uniform then walk to Shidou and move Chupa Chups in her mouth upward.

"What's with that face you're making, Shidou. — The contest has just started."

"Eh...?"

- Shidou incline his head. He then widen his eyes a little after. People are starting to assemble in front of circle <Ratatoskr>. And they're not a passerby like earlier. They're lining up to buy <Ratatoskr>'s book.

"T-This is...!"

- Shidou raise up his voice. Kotori triumphantly fold her hands.

"Hmp, see, it's as I said. Kaguya and Yuzuru, please take the end of line board and organize the line."

"Kaka, understood!"

"Understand. Leave it to me."

- Following Kotori's order, Yamai sisters then start organizing the lines in front of the booth. That is when Shidou shake his shoulder. He noticed there are few people he know in the line. — They are <Ratatoskr> staff.

"...Isn't this what they called 'shills'?"

- Shidou asked Kotori in a small voice. Kotori snort a little and look at him with a half-open eyes.

"That's not a nice thing to say. A 'friend' only come visiting our booth. Isn't it normal for an acquaintance to buy a self-published book by someone they know? I also tell everyone to call their friends as well."

"W-well, that might be the case if you put it that way..."

- Shidou then incline his head at a certain point in Kotori's words.

"...\_Everyone\_"

- Shidou have a bad feeling and mumbled. Next moment, a familiar voice is heard.

"Yahoo~! Tohka-chan, I'm here!"

"That's a lot of people."

"This reminded me of Congo's Wetland Battle."

- Three girls who were lining up in the line then walk to the booth. Shidou choked when he saw them. They're his classmate, Ai, Mai and Mii.

"Ooh! So you three come!"

- Tohka cheerfully raise up her voice. Those three then loosen their lips.

"Well sure, if Tohka-chan asked us to come, then I can't decline."

"Right right. I also want to come to Comico a little."

"...Ah! Captain! I found the Playboy Monster Man!"

"What!?"

- The three then entered their battle mode when they see Shidou. Shidou let out a breath like to give up and answer back to them,

"...Hey, you three. It has been a while..."

"Everyone, be careful!"

"He's going to persuade a girl again!"

"If you don't be careful he will make you pregnant!"

"....."

- Shidou twitch his cheek. Looks like they still thinking about the happening at earlier this month. Shidou thought he have to clear up the misunderstanding some day, but never thought he'd met them today.

- However Shidou is now working against time. Kotori who came up with the same thought then response to them in a businesslike manner.

"It is 500 Yen for each copy. So I take it you want three?"

"Eh? Ah, yes. We'd like three."

"Uwa, the cover is nice. Who draw this?"

"Or rather isn't this character resembles Itsuka-kun?"

- Said that, those three then buy the book then wave her hands at Tohka and leave. Even though they're usually a joker, looks like they also have

common sense to not start a quarrel when people are lining up behind them.

- Shidou let out a breath in relief and back to selling the book. After a while, three woman in different age range come to the booth. A tall woman in the second half of her twenties, a small girl and a half with blonde hair. They raise up a voice when they notice Origami.

"Ah, she's here. Origami! What is it, calling me out of sudden."

"— Captain."

- Kotori response to the tall woman. Shidou then realized this woman is a captain of AST. Her name is Kusakabe Ryouko. Looks like it was Origami who called them here. The other two are probably from AST as well.

"Origami-san! It has been a while!"

"Ah... did you cut your hair? You sure are decisive."

"Mike. Mlidred."

- Origami call their name. Mike then act like she is wiping her tears.

"Uu... I'm so lonely ever since Origami-san leave AST out of sudden. Please come back..."

"That's right~. Why did you leave so sudden?"

"I have my circumstances. I'm sorry, but I don't plan to go back to AST."

"I see... how unfortun— aw!"

- Ryouko then poke Mike in her head.

"...You two. Why are you talking about AST in a place like this."

"Ah...! Sorry, I forgot..."

"It is fine. Those words would easily be buried in a place like this."

- Origami said in a calm voice. Mikie then make a surprised looks at Origami.

"...Origami-san, isn't your personality changed a little bit?"

- Origami then cling her arms to Shidou.

"Because of him."

"Nwhat...!?"

"Kyaa! So that's what happened!?"

- Mikie shocked at Origami's words. Mildred turn her cheek red. Ryouko then push down the head of those two who were getting noisy.

"Hey, don't get so noisy. — Anyway, since we came here, let us buy the book. Can I have three copies."

"Thank you."

- Origami calmly take their money and hand over them the book. Ryouko then make a dubious looks and start looking at Tohka and others.

"...Origami, why do I feel I've seen these girls somewhere before..."

"It's just your imagination."

"Are you sure, I think..."

"Your imagination."

"No, but..."

"Thank you very much."

"....."

- Origami bow to her without letting her continue. Ryouko give up and let out her breath and take Mike and Mildred with her. Before Mike leave, she point her finger at Shidou and say "I-I won't lose!" Shidou don't know how to response.

- However, what Shidou don't know is not only the response. The number of people in front of <Ratatoskr> booth can't be explained with just 'shills.' Noticing Shidou's looks, Nakatsugawa who is organizing the cardboard box in the back of the booth then raise up his voice.

"It's not strange. It's true that we're not listed in the catalogue. But looking at it the other way, we're a 'mysterious circle' that appeared out of nowhere. If someone know about our existance, it's not strange for them to have an interest in us."

"E-Even still, isn't the problematic part is to make our existance known..."

- Shidou said that. Nakatsugawa then push his glasses.

"Have you forgot, Shidou-kun? We're next to a popular circle, <Honjou-dou>."

"Ah —"

- Shidou widen his eyes. It's as he said. It's not strange if someone who came to buy Nia's book to have interest in the mysterious booth next to her. And there's also —

"— Is it here? The booth that wasn't listed in the catalogue."

"But a new circle suddenly become a wall booth? What is this?"

"Yeah... looks like that appraiser MUNECHIKA is with them."

"Really!? The person that all circle that he have his eyes on become a popular circle, and those he recommend will surely be hugely successful even in commercial scene!? That guy!?"

"What!? The championship of moe anime, the 7th champion, MUNECHIKA is!?"

"I heard Super-Galactic Banchou MUNECHIKA is back!?"

"....."

- Those voice are heard from the hall. Shidou look at Nakatsugawa without saying anything but he only make a troubled face.

"Me right now is only an ordinary staff."

"O-Okay"

- Shidou feel he shouldn't continue the topic. Shidou feel now is finally become like a contest. Long lines also has an effect to make people want to line up. those that finished buying their most wanted books start lining up at Shidou's booth.

- Seeing that, Kotori then raise up her voice while taking the book to add to the pile from Kawagoe.

"Good... let's keep this going. Nia has 3 people selling the book, 2 organizing the line and 1 for managing the stock. But we have 12 peoples including Kawagoe and others. We're miles ahead of her in how many books we can sell at a time."

- The spirits heard Kotori's voice and continue selling the book. The number cardboard box on the back decrease steadily. And eventually the wide gap of leftover stock between <Honjou-dou> and <Ratatoskr> has closed up to about the same number. Kotori fold her arms and look at the circle next to her.



"Fufmp, you see now, Nia. We caught up with you. Looks like we have advantage over you in the number of cashier we have. Or do you considered this to be a foul play?"

"S-Shido... people are gone"

"...W-What are you going to do now"

- Tohka and Natsumi said in a worried voice. Shidou try his best to think up of something.

"I-Is there no way... If this continues...!"

- However Shidou cannot come up with anything. While he keep struggling, <Honjou-dou> still keep selling in steadily pace. One more cardboard box is gone from the booth.

"Ku... what should I—!"

- If this continues, then Nia will finish selling her book. In other words — that means Shidou will lost the chance to seal Nia's spirit power. However no matter how hard he tried, he couldn't come up with any idea. He could only look at the participants passing by while putting his hand on the table.

- However, the next moment. Someone take Shidou's hand.

"Eh...?"

- Shidou look up to the owner of that hand. — Miku is smiling at him.

"Ufufu... it's so unlike darling to give up so easily~. The contest is still going on. Or rather, the contest is just starting."

"Miku...?"

- A question mark popped up in Shidou's mind. — What Miku said is not just trying to cheer up Shidou out of nothing. Miku nod to him and look at Nia.

"Well, Nia-san, it's a contest."

- She then point her finger at Nia. Nia make a wondering looks seeing Miku's action.

"...? I don't know what you're going to do, but I think it's difficult to recover from this point."

Ufufu, do you think so~? — Hey, Nia-san, I heard you've been captured by DEM for so long, do you know a SNS~?"

"Sure, a social networking service, right? I know about it. I'm not owner of omniscient angel for nothing."

"...But you didn't know about me~. You never thought of looking up about it~. I see~."

"...Sorry."

- Miku said like she's complaining. She then shook her head to clear out that thought.

"Anyway! Right now, more than half of people in this country are using that social networking service. — And considering the age group of people in this hall, don't you think that ratio would become much her~?"

"...! Miku, don't tell me —"

- Kotori noticed something and raise up her voice. She then take out her smartphone and start manipulating it. Few seconds later, Kotori become speechless.

"H-Hey, Kotori, what happened?"

"This."

- Kotori show her smartphone screen to Shidou. Tohka, Yoshino and Origami who are nearby then look at the screen. In the screen is a page from certain social network service. There is an icon of Miku along with a comment written on it.

'Miku Izayoi: I'm helping out my friend's circle at Comico~! I'm going to hand over the book by my hand at West A-20-5 Circle <Ratatoskr>!  
Photographing is OK too!"

"Wha...!? M-Miku!?"

- Shidou widen his eyes. Miku laugh and poke her finger to Shidou's chest.

"I can't endure it if darling and others tried all your best and only me stand by without doing my best. I'm also the same as Natsumi-san — I want to be a use to everyone."

"Miku...!"

- Miku lowered her face for a second before she raised her face up. She then turn herself toward Nia.

"Even though we can't win you without relying on a shortcut. Then we'll use that shortcut over shortcut and overtake you!"

- Miku point her finger at Nia to provoke and continue,

"Then, let me show you, Nia-san. The power of the woman you don't know about. And be sure to remember. My name — Izayoi Miku!"

- Miku then spread her arms like she is singing an opera. Even though she might not intend of it, that exact moment, an enormouse crowd of people start rushing into the hall like when the event started.

"— It's show time!"

- Miku raise up her hands and snapped her fingers. The group that rushed into the hall then come to <Ratatoskr>.

"Wha! Really Miku-tan!"

"Seriously!? The real person!? Why is she here..."

"U-um, I heard you're going to hand the book from your hands, is it true...?"

- A boy ask her timidly. Miku choked at the presence of a man for a second. However, she then smile.

"Yes, it's true~. Thank you for all your support."

'Ooooooooooooooooooooooooooh~!'

- Heard that, the group then start shouting and lining up to the <Ratatoskr>'s booth.

"...! Kaguya, Yuzuru, please take care of the lines! Kawagoe and others please help filling books and lead the guests who finished buying!"

- Kotori who were completely dumbfounded returned to her commander mode and start ordering everyone in the booth.

"Shidou, Tohka, Origami and Yoshino continue to do the cashier with me! Natsumi do the selling and get hugged by Miku to regain her strength if she is tired."

"Isn't my role somewhat strange!?"

- Even though one of them raise up their voices in dissatisfaction, the spirit continue to do their job. Seeing them, Nia then knit her brows.

"Hmp... she sure have done it. So she's really famous."

"...Yeah, isn't she amazing? She's our proud idol."

"You won't going to say this is cheating now do you?"

- Shidou and Kotori looked back at Nia and said to her. Nia shrug and nod to them.

"Sure — but can you really catch up?"

- Nia make a cold stare and raise the tip of her mouth. Shidou strongly nod back to her and answer.

"Of course! We'll surely catch up to you! Not only for myself, but for everyone who supported me as well! And Nia! For you too...!"

- Heard Shidou's answer, Nia answer back to him in a laughing tone while still continue selling her books.

"Well thanks for that. But even if you say that I won't give you anything extra."

"It's fine! I just have to win!"

"Ahahaha! That's right! If you can win —"

- However, Nia who were laughing pleasantly suddenly stopped her words. A question mark popped up in Shidou's head for a moment before he notice the cause. In front of Nia's booth, there is a woman in thick glasses walking to her.

"T-Takajou... sensei..."

- Nia let out a voice in stupefaction. The woman is a mangaka Takajou Hiroki that Shidou met yesterday.

"Ahaha, nice to see you again, Honjou-sensei. I heard you have a booth today in a while, so I come to take a look."

"Ah... um... thanks..."

- Nia answer her incoherently while making an awkward looks.

"I'm sorry to come here out of sudden. I apologize if you're bothered by it. But... may I ask one thing?"

- Takajou look at Nia from the back of the lense. Nia awkwardly avert her eyes away.

"...Did I do something rude to you? If I ever did, please let me apologize."

- Said that, Takajou bow to Nia. Nia awkwardly try to avoid eye contact with her.

"N-No... there's no way you ever did that!"

"Is that so?"

- Nia said in a high voice unlike her usual easy tone. Takajou widen her eyes at Nia's answer. However, Nia only return to her with an evasively answer. The silence continue for a moment before Takajou decided it is not polite to block the line any longer. She let out a breath and buy one of Nia's book then bow to her.

"Even if you hate me... I will still continue enjoying Honjou-sensei's books."

"Ah..."

- Nia tried to say something but she couldn't continue her words and only bow back to Takajou. Looking at their actions, Shidou then certain about the reason of his little strange feeling after he talk with Takajou yesterday.

"Nia"

"...! Ah, Boy. I'm sorry for showing you such an embarrassing scene. But the contest is —"

"You... sure like her, do you?"

"What!?"

- Nia widen her eyes at Shidou's words.

"W-What are you saying, Boy. I'm not into that hobby."

"That's not what I meant. I mean... you like her as a human... or rather, as a friend, do you?"

- Even though it is true that Nia become disappointed in humans because of <Rasiel>'s power and depends on 2D as her relief and become mangaka as a result. There is one difference between Nia and other spirits that despaired in humanity.

- That is, Nia herself keep maintaining a basic level of communication skills in order for her to stay within human's society. This is probably the cause of the strange point Shidou feel yesterday.

- Kotori guessed that Nia used <Rasiel> to investigate about Takajou who were closed to her, know her true nature, and start keeping distance from her as a result.

- However, Shidou thought that in case of Nia, if she become estranged to someone after she knew their true nature, then she should rather be able to smooth it over and continue on-the-surface relationship with them. When Shidou thought to that, he came to certain possibility.

"Nia... are you just scared?"

"Huh? W-What are you talking about—?"

"If you become closed to her like that, you thought one day you won't be able to restraint your curiosity to use <Rasiel> — and will be disappointed in a friend you finally got as a result. That's why you keep your distance from her, do you?"

- Heard Shidou's words, Nia choked a little before she turn her face away. She answer to Shidou while keep selling the book.

"Huh. I don't understand what Boy is saying! — Ah, that would be 500 Yen."

"Then what was that earlier! In your case, you should be able to act normally before someone you hate, don't you!? — Thank you very much."



- Nia and Shidou keep responding to the participants while exchanging looks to each other. The scene become an odd quarrel as a result.



"You sure are annoying! Just focus on selling already! — Ah, the end of line is over there."

"Sorry to say I can't do that! I want to win this content to save you! It would be meaningless if I leave this issue just like this! — Yes, please take the book from over there!"

- Nia feel annoyed and groan in "Guuuu..." voice after hearing Shidou's words while still moving her hands. She then become impatient and shout to Shidou.

"You're right, but is it bad to be scared! Even I want a friend too! But I can't! Do you think someone with a super high technology observation camera that can observe anyone all the whole time can have a friend!? — OK, 1,000 Yen!"

- Nia said with a frown. Heard that, Shidou feel the reason for her solitude is sensible. While she also fear that one day she will lost to her curiosity and investigate about her friend... she also feel guilty at the fact she can look into her friend's life if she wanted.

- It is a agony of those who have power that resembles a god. A solitude that there is nobody like her. It is something for people without spirit power cannot understand. However, Shidou continue raising up his voice,

"For something like that, you won't know without doing it!"

"Ha! That's easier said than done! Let me ask you back, Boy. If you know someone who can track you anytime no matter you're in a toilet or taking a bath, and also able to investigate into your past easily, do you think you can be friend with her from the bottom of your heart!?"

- Nia shout in sorrow. However, Shidou make an amazed look for a second before he laugh out loud.

"Haha... Hahahahahahahahahahahahaha!"

"W-What's so strange about it!"

- Nia asked back in puzzlement. Shidou let out a breath and brush his hair back.

"—Sorry, but I'm already used to \_that kind of person\_! Ah... I understand now. Looks like my compatibility with you is just perfect! Privacy! What is that, can I eat it!? Or rather you who keep worrying about those kind of stuff looks like an angel in my eyes!"

"W-What!?"

- Nia frown unable to understand what Shidou is saying. Shidou look at her reaction and continue raising his voice.

"If you want to take a look, then do it! If you want to look up about my past, then do it! Even still! I won't hate you!"

".....!"

- Nia choked at Shidou's shout. However, she then bite her teeth in frustration and answer him.

"Haaaaaaaaaaaaa!? What are you talking about!? If I look into you in detail then it's me who's going to hate you!?"

- The time continue flowing while they're exchanging their words. Lines for both <Ratatoskr> and <Honjou-dou> are not getting shorter. They keep seeling the book. Even though <Honjou-dou> have about 500 copies in lead, <Ratatoskr> is above them for the speed of cashier.

- Some continue selling book, some organizing lines. Some getting hugged by idol who were tired at the handing of the book. She shouted. Her eyes

become teary. In that enthusiasm, while everyone is doing their mission. Eventually...

'— Thank you very much!'

- The voice of Shidou and Nia who finished selling their last book is heard in the hall at the same time.

"...!"

"...!?"

- Shidou gasp for air and look at Nia. Nia also look at Shidou. Even though now is in middle of winter, their face looks flushed with sweat pouring out from their forehead. Nia's glasses also get foggy. When both are recovering their breath, a voice is heard from both booth at the same time.

"<Ratatoskr>, sold out!"

"<Honjou-dou>, sold out!"

- Both booth sold out at the exactly same time. Heard that declaration, the participants who were still in the line make a voice of disappointment and leave the line. Shidou and Nia let out their breath while looking at those people and throw themselves down into the steel chair.

"...Well, looks like it's a tie."

- Kotori tighten her expression and look at Nia.

"....."

- After few seconds, Nia who were looking at the ceiling while leaning her back to the chair remove her glasses and wipe off her sweat with her sleeve. She then stare at Shidou and start searching in the table. She take out a book they exchanged at the start of the event out.

"...Fine. This is a reward for able to come this far. — I'll read it."

'.....!'

- Heard Nia's words, Shidou and other <Ratatoskr> member raise up a cheer.



- 1 hour after the doujinshi sold out. Shidou and others clean up the booth space, wait for spirits for exchange their clothes and leave the hall to the park at the back of Tenguu Square. Since they're going to talk about spirits, then it's better to do it where <Honjou-dou> staff are not around.

- Shidou thought it's strange for manga lover like Nia to not leave her booth to buy a doujinshi, but turns out she hired some people to buy the book she wanted. Nia explained that even though she want to buy the doujinshi by herself, she can't leave her booth alone. That's why she used this method.

"— Well, then let me start reading it.'

- Said that, Nia then sit on the bench in the park with the book in her hand. Even though the match is a tie and they success in getting Nia to read the book, the hardest part is from now. If she don't come to like Shidou in this book, then it's impossible for him to seal her power.

'.....'

- Shidou and others continue staring at Nia. Nia knitted her brows and look up to everyone.

"...If you all look at me like that, it's hard for me to read it."

"A-Ah, sorry..."

- Shidou scratch his cheek and avert his eyes away. The spirits also do the same.

"That's not really what I meant..."

- Nia let out her breath and look at them with sharp eyes.

"Anyway, I'm going to confirm it again. What I agree to was to read this book. After that is an another story! Don't expect anything, okay?"

"...Sure, I understand."

- Shidou said in a nervous voice. Nia shrugged and wave her hand telling Shidou and others to go the other way.

"Unwell, can you go over there for now? The time to read manga, you know, should not be interrupted by anybody, is free, and it must make you feel relief."

"S-Sure...?"

- Shidou can't understand what she's talking about for the latter part. He understand that she want to be alone. Shidou then take the spirits away from Nia.

"Haa... darn"

- After Nia is alone, she let out her breath.

"...Boy sure say everything he wanted."

- Nia recalled the happening in the hall earlier and twist her face in irritation. However, she know the exact reason of her irritation. It is because everything he said is true.

"...Since you talk that big, if the book isn't good then I won't forgive you."

- Nia blink few times to clear out her thought. She fix the position of her glasses and look at the doujinshi in her hands. On the cover, there is a character that resembles Shidou.

- Nia thought when she saw it in the hall few hours ago that even though the lines might be a little rough, the drawing itself isn't something an amateur can do. Enough to make Nia wonder if they hired some pro mangaka to work on it.

"Hmp. Well... what's important is the content."

- Nia mumbled and open the book. The art in the volume is passable for a doujinshi. The lines looks a little different from page to page, but it's in passable mark for a smooth reading. The story start when a boy — Itsuka Shidou met a spirit girl.

- The story of the boy who exchanged his path with a girl who got denied by humans due to her power. After that, the boy met several spirits, and open up their heart with his honest will.

"...I see."



- Few minutes later. Nia who finished the book let out a voice and scratch her cheek. The result — Shidou's book is something beyond Nia's expectation. She think nobody would believe this book was made in two days by an amateur.

- However, on the other hand, her evaluation of it is just that. Even though the book is well-made, for Nia to be able to love the boy in the book or not is completely different story.

- At foremost, there is not enough pages. Even though it can't be helped considering their limited time, but the story was too packed that following the story is all you can do. They're unable to fully express the charm of the main character.

- Second, this main character — Itsuka Shidou — doesn't seems realistic at all. Since the book was written with an intention to seal Nia's spirit power, Shidou is looking too much of a hero in this book. Nia thought even if she fall in love with the character, she will be disappointed when comparing him with Shidou in real life.

"It's unfortunately... Boy. Even though you tried your best, you can't really make me fall for you."

- Nia breath out a sigh and those words. She then close the book. However, Nia still have something in her mind. She look around to see nobody's around and raise up her hand to the air and summon <Rasiel>. Nia command her angel in her mind and touch the cover. — In order to see the scene when Shidou and others make this book.

- Even though the content of the book couldn't get Nia's approval. She wonder about the method they did to get a book of this quality in such a short time. That fact interest her as a mangaka.

- <Rasiel>'s page begin emitting light. Nia look at the page and touch it. The same moment, the information of when Shidou and others were making the book are then start flowing into her mind.

"...I see. After they decided about the story, they split task with that Natsumi girl as a main artist... but I guess this method won't be useful for me.

There's no way I could get that much digital assistant. As expected from <Ratatoskr>, they sure are reckless."

- That moment — Nia who were being satisfied by the information moved her brows.

(I want to let that stubborn Nia to know it too...)

(— that friendship — is wonderful...)

- She heard that voice of Natsumi.

"...Fmp"

- Nia displeased and twisted her face.

"Sure, sure. Thank you for your valuable opinion."

- Nia then widened her eyes.

"Eh...?"

- In the <Rasiel> page Nia is touching, a new line of text is added to it. At the same time, a new scene then starts flowing into Nia's mind. It is about when Natsumi still has her spirit power. When Natsumi who distrusts humans gets to know Shidou and others, and starts to open up her heart to their kindness.

"T-This is..."

- Nia let out a voice in amazement. Nia could understand vaguely of what happened. Even though <Rasiel> is an omniscient angel, it could only give her the information she need. Nia probably wish about it somewhere deep down in her head. — She wonder what kind of experience that caused Natsumi so say those naive words that she can't stand listening to.

- However, not only that. In <Rasiel>, a new line start popping up. Those new information flow into her mind in succession. Origami, Miku, Kaguya, Yuzuru, Kotori, Yoshino and... Tohka. The scene of those girls with their heart shut closed start changing themselves after they come into a warm light that is Shidou.

Ah — it is the same as what is written in the book Nia just read.

"A... Ah..."

- The doujinshi has no dramatization even a little bit. The boy name Itsuka Shidou always try to save these girls with all his best without even considering about himself. The problem he face with is not just one or two. The darkness inside the girls' heart, the gloomy past — and a cruel, true nature.

- Even facing with that, Shidou never gave up. Even though he want to give up, he always stand up and face it again. Nia could now realize it. Those words Shidou said to her earlier was not a lie. To the girls, he is no doubt — a hero.

Drop. Drop.

- A water dropped onto <Rasiel>'s page and become covered with light.

"....."

- It took Nia after she released her hands from <Rasiel> to realize that was her own tears.

"....."

- Shidou is shaking his leg sitting on the bench at the west side of the park while waiting for Nia.

"Shidou, that is a bad banner."

"A-Ah, sorry."

- Shidou stopped shaking his legs when Kotori pointed out. Looking at her, Kotori also move the Chupa Chups in her mouth restlessly. However that is understandable. Now it is up to Nia's judgement whether they will be able to seal her or not — and that also means to be able to protect her from DEM under <Ratatoskr>'s protection or not as well.

"! Shido!"

- Suddenly Tohka raise up her voice. Shidou turn his face up hearing Tohka voice. Nia is walking toward them in the direction where they were gathering earlier.

"...! Nia—"

"Kuku... so she come."

"Nervous. I wonder about the result."

- Spirits gulped down their saliva. However, Shidou knitted his eyebrows when Nia come nearby. Her eyes has turned red from bloodshot.

"Nia...? What happened?"

".... No, nothing~..."

- Nia answered lightly and let out a breath. Shidou can't continue digging to deep once she said that. And before that — there's one thing more important.

"And... what about it, Nia. Our book."

"....."

- Nia keep quiet and look at the doujinshi in her hands. She then shrugged.

"Even though it is well-made, but this alone won't be enough for me to fall for you. Looks like your were being overly optimistic. I'm sorry, but I don't think I'm that cheap woman."

"U... gu..."

"N-no..."

Shidou bite his teeth and grip his fist. He feel powerless. Other spirits also make a similar expression in disappointment. — However,

"...But, well"

- Nia avert her eyes and continue,

"Since it's not like there's no good point about it... how could I say it... I guess I should give you one more chance."

"Eh...?"

- Shidou widen his eyes in amazement and answer to her. Nia turned her face red feeling a little shy.

"...As I said, I'll give you one more chance to date with me. If Boy is also a man, then try done it this time."

".....!"

- Shidou feel a goosebump runs through his body. He feel his body that is almost collapsing down start becoming energetic again and a feeling to want to shout out loud start dancing in his organs.

"Shido!"

- Tohka and others are also the same. She jumped to Shidou like he just made a goal.

"Kyaa! Darling you did it~!"

"You're... amazing!"

"Of course. This is result of Shidou's charm."

"Hahaha... stop it everyone. ...Er, Miku and Origami can you please actually stop. Um, hey? Why are you trying to take off my clothes out of confusion."

"Eeh~? We didn't do it, right~?"

"We didn't. Even though it might end up as so, that is only an accident. It's not because of anyone."

"Kyaa! Kyaaaaa!"

"H-Hey, you two, what are you doing to Shido!?"

- Tohka try to stop Origami and Miku. With that as a trigger, other spirits also joining in. Shidou is then being pushed by everyone.

"...Pu, haha, ahahahahaha!"

- Nia who were looking at the scene can't resist and start laughing.

"How should I put it... How envy, you all. — Hey, Boy, if it is you"

- However, before Nia could finished her words. That moment. An 'abnormality' happened. Nia choked and start shaking her body. She hold her head and sink down her knee to the ground.

"Eh...? Ah, ah, ah, ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh, ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh...!?"

- She then start twisting her face and screaming in pain.

"N-Nia...!?"

- Shidou wonder what happened and run up to Nia who start screaming out of sudden. However, dark-colored spirit power start overflowing out from her body and start eroding the ground. A second later, a Space Quake alarm is rang throughout the town from the spirit power it could detected.

"Na... this is...!?"

"Nia! What happened!?"

- Shidou raise a panic voice. Kotori pushed something in her right ear and start speaking. Looks like the commanding room just contacted her via the Incom.

"...What did you just said!? What happened!?"

"Kotori! What is happening!? What's wrong with Nia...!?"

- Shidou asked. Kotori shudder and,

"...Spirit power, category E. — Nia is going Inverse...!"

- Said those desperate words to him.

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## Chapter 5 - What you have is mine

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- In the backseat of a car running in Tenguu City. Isaac Westcott is looking at the terminal in his hands and twist his lips.

"This is not bad development. As expected, pilot Knox and his fellow sure did a great job. If we do it by ourselves then there will be some 'traces' left."

"— You mean for 'Material A'?"

- Ellen who sat next to Westcott take a glance at his terminal and said. Westcott nod at her dramatically.

"Yes. That's right. Even though I guess it makes sense to call by her code name <Sister> now."

"....."

- Ellen keep quiet a little before she continue,

"...I'm glad to hear that, but, isn't it risky to release a spirit we captured to the wild?"

- Said that and Ellen frown in dissatisfaction. <Sister> was the spirit Ellen capture with her hands five years ago and also the only spirit in DEM's procession. It make sense for Ellen to be dissatisfied with the current mission. However Westcott only loosen his cheek at Ellen's looks that looked like sullen child.

"What is it"

"No. It's as you said. It is possible that DEM just lost the most important material it has. However — you also can't deny we were stuck."

- Ellen make a grunt at Westcott's words.

"That's... true"

"In the past five years, we did all the physical and mental pain we could think to <Sister>. However, none of that could get her into a complete Inverse state."

- Westcott take a glance to Ellen and continue,

"However, the Inverse form of <Princess> that appear before us three months ago was splendid. Even though we didn't do any harm to her."

- Westcott close his eyes. In the September he could never forgot, Westcott and Ellen has successfully turned spirit <Princess> into Inverse state. And the cause of that was the boy who could seal spirits power — Itsuka Shidou.

- The power of the boy was found out by <Ratatoskr>. He open the heart of spirits one after another and seal their power. However, that relationship between him and the spirit itself, that was created while he was trying to seal them, is the cause for <Princess>'s Inverse.

"That's why I let <Sister>, my beloved precious spirit, to get away from my hands even just temporary. — Of couse, after planting a small Realizer inside her brain and make her forgot everything we've done to her in the past 5 years."

- And that was a special 'treatment' he had done to <Sister>. She probably couldn't remembered how her belly got cut open while alive, or how she got her skull opened, or how her hands and legs got cut by a millimeters after another. She couldn't probably remembered any of it.

- There are two reasons why he decided to seal her memory. First is simply because her mental has almost completely broke down thanks to all the experiment they have done to her. If she didn't got her memories sealed, she couldn't even retain her consciousness anymore.

- And the second reason is —

"...Oh?"

- Westcott noticed the number in the terminal has began to change and move his brows.

"Is there anything happened?"

"There seems to be a disarray in <Sister>'s mental condition. — Looks like Itsuka Shidou did strengthen his bond with her well according to my expectation."

- Westcott lift up the tip of his lips.

"5 years ago, when we captured <Sister>, she already abandon her hope in humans. Even though it's tragic, but that is because of own power. — However, now is different. She met with Itsuka Shidou, and got to know a warmth of humans just like any other spirits. She see a light in a world where already lose interest in. Don't you think it's wonderful?"

- Westcott exchange his looks with Ellen and make an uncanny smile.

"Then"

"Yes. Let's do it. Start the preparation. — After my signal, activate the Realizer inside <Sister>'s brain. Once we do that, \_all the memories she lost in the past 5 years will come back to her vividly\_."

- Westcott lower his eyes at the number on the terminal. The girl now realized there's still hope. She now realized it's not yet a time to abandon her hope for humans. — Without ever knowing that is going to be coated with a despair.

"It's simple. Compare to dropping a glass, dropping it from a higher place make it broke much easier."

- Westcott then raise up a voice,

"— Well, let's go Ellen. For our long-cherished wish."

"Yes. Sure, Ike."

- Ellen said that in a calm voice. Westcott nod to her in satisfaction and look at the person sitting in passenger seat on the front.

"I'm counting on you to help Ellen too."

"....."

- To response to Westcott, the girl only nod without saying anything.



"Aaaaa, aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah....!!"

- A mud of spirit power start pouring out from Nia's body along with her painful scream. The spirit power melt the ground it touches. Wounds start appearing everywhere in Nia's body along with blood, even though there's nothing attacking her, \_as if Nia's body suddenly remembered the existence of those wounds\_.

- Not before soon, those blood and the spirit power start changing Nia's form. From the nun-like uniform of her into something ominous unlike what in Shidou's memory.

"N-Nia..."

- Shidou let out a voice while dumbfoundedly looking at her. Shidou — or rather, everyone — have ever seen a scene like this before. The inverse of Sephira. The phenomenon that happened when spirits fall into the abyss of despair.

- However, there's a thing that Shidou don't know. Although both Tohka and Origami ever went Inverse before. In Tohka's case, it was because Shidou was going to be killed in front of her. In Origami's case, it was because she killed her own parents.

- But in case of Nia, Shidou couldn't think of a reason. The despair just happened out of sudden, in the moment she tried to walk toward Shidou, without any signs of it.

"...W-what is happening. Why out of sudden..."

"Nia-san...! Why..."

- Natsumi and Yoshino said while frowning at the violent spirit power coming out of Nia's body. The next moment, Nia's body start shaking and raise up her face like she is a marionette.

"Aa, Aaaaaaaaaa"

- The face that twisted in pain. Her face that has been stained with her blood looked like a holy mother who cried in blood. Nia let out a hoarse voice that nobody could say it is even a voice.



"— <Beel... ze... bub> —"

- Along with that voice, a book appear in front of her. Shidou feel a pressure from it just by looking. He is sure that it is "Demon King", the same kind of being as <Nehema> or <Satan>.

- <Beelzebub> stay still in the air and start turning its page automatically. The page then come out of its spine and scattering around creating a storm of paper.

"T-This is..."

"Be careful, Shidou. That is not just a paper, but part of a demon king."

- Origami said in a calm yet cautious voice. As if to response to Origami's words, pages of <Beelzebub> that scattered around start emitting a dark light.

"What...!?"

- Shidou widen his eyes at what he saw. Monsters made out of darkness start crawling out from those pages of <Beelzebub>. Those monsters roared and kicked the floor toward Shidou and others.

"Uwa...!"

- Shidou stiffen his body at the sudden happening. However, before a monster could get to Shidou, its body is blown away by a light and disappeared. Shidou quickly understand what just happened. It was Origami who manifested her Limited Astral Dress and use <Metatron> to defeat those monsters.

- Not only Origami, but all spirits except Kotori also manifested their Limited Astral Dress. They are staring at Nia who is spawning darkness around her and the monster that created from the darkness.

"Everyone...!"

"I don't know what is happening... but I know I can't leave it like this!"

"Please leave all these obstacles to us~! Darling please get to Nia-san!"

- Tohka and Miku shouted to Shidou and take a fighting posture. As if to react to them, more pages start coming out of <Beelzebub> creating even more countless number of monsters.

"Ku..."

- Shidou knit his brows and lower his posture at the army of Nia that keeps expanding its force. The only one who can seal spirit power is Shidou. That is why he must go close to her. Shidou don't disagree with that — however there is still one thing he's worrying about.

"...Will Nia turn back to normal if I kissed her...?"

- Even though Tohka turned back to normal because of his kiss. And Origami turned back to normal because of his voice from outside and a voice of 'Origami's another self' from inside. But for Nia, the bond between Shidou and her is too shallow.

- Shidou is not sure if he could turn Nia back to normal if he use the same method as before. Noticing that Shidou's looks, Kotori then snort to him.

"I don't know about that. — But since you don't have any other ways, you have no choices but to do it. Believe in what we did to now and hope our voice can reach Nia."



"...Yes, you're right."

- Shidou loosen his stiffen cheek and look at Nia. Even though her looks is sinister and ominous — there's a sorrow in her scream.

"I will help Nia. Everyone... please lend me your power!"

'Ooh!'

- The spirits raise up their voice in response to Shidou's call. However, that moment.

"— I'm sorry to say that won't be possible."

- A voice is heard from somewhere. After that, a girl in a silver uniform appeared from the sky. She came down to the ground on the opposite side of Shidou with Nia in between in an appearance that believe herself is the strongest being in the world without any doubts. She then continue as if she's looking down to Shidou,

"Because I'm here."

"...! Ellen...!"

- Shidou knitted his brows. Ellen Mira Mathers. The world's strongest wizard. The human that could surpass spirits. The human that exceeded humans. Ellen avert her eyes from Shidou into Nia who has been swallowed by darkness.

"— I see. You looked wonderful now, <Sister>. As expected from Ike."

- Kotori make a displeased face at Ellen's words.

"...And so I thought you appeared in the right timing. So it was your people's doings?"

"That's right. DEM own that spirit from the start. — You're in a good luck today. Since I have something else to do after this, if you agree to leave, I will overlook you."

- Said that, Ellen then make an action like she is chasing them away. Shidou bite his teeth.

"Don't joke with me! I won't let you people have Nia!"

"— I don't plan to talk with you."

- Ellen do not care about Shidou's words. She grip the hilt of her equipment in her back and draw it out. It is Ellen's personal weapon that made its blade of a magic power — laser blade <Caledvwlch>.

- Following her reaction, monsters around Nia then start attacking Ellen at once. Ellen knit her brows a little and use her Territory to defeat all those monsters.

"Looks like demon king's power is a little troublesome. Let's finish it fast."

- Said that, Ellen use her Territory to spring herself into Nia while raising her <Caledvwlch>. However, before Ellen could get close to Nia, Tohka who were nearby kicked the ground and spring herself to repel <Caledvwlch> away.

"I won't let you!"

"So you intend to interrupt me. It's fine — if that's the case then I won't show any mercy."

- Ellen make a sharp looks and swing down her blade quickly enough that eyes can't see it. Tohka frown and recieve her blade. However, even though Tohka is a spirit, she cannot use her full power. Odds are against her for her to fight with the strongest wizard. Tohka is being pushed by Ellen a little by little.

"Tohka!"

"Chi — she can't fight alone! Kaguya, Yuzuru, Miku go to support Tohka! Yoshino, Natsumi, Origami try to get rid of the dark monster around Nia and clear the way for Shidou!"

- Kotori who were looking at the situation from the back raise up her voice. The spirit quickly follow her instruction and split into a group that is stopping Ellen and a group that defeat the monsters.

"Tohka and others can't keep up too long fighting with Ellen. Let's get it done quick!"

"Ah...! I'm counting on you, Yoshino, Natsumi, Origami!"

- Yoshino, Natsumi and Origami nod at Shidou's words. They then begin using their angel.

"Please... move away..."

'He~y, get out of the way, you all!'

"<Metatron>"

"...<Hanniel>!"

- Yoshino manipulated <Zadkiel> and froze all the monsters to stop them. Use that opening Yoshino created, Origami released ray of light to those monsters with her <Metatron>. Natsumi also changed all the pages of <Beelzebub> on the ground into a leaf with her <Hanniel>. Not before long,

the group of monsters that were roaring in front of Nia then all disappeared.

- Even though there are still a lot of monsters around, and as long as <Beelzebub> is around the monsters will spawn neverending, however it's not impossible to make Nia become defendless for few seconds with spirit's powers.

- However —

"...!?"

- Shidou heard someone caughting their breath from his left and look that way. He then frown at an unbelievable scene he saw. Origami is pointing her <Metatron> toward her own body and released ray of light to herself. Origami hold down her side that is bleeding and twist her face in agony.

"Origami!? What are you doing!"

"Kya...!?"

"Wa... W-what is this...!"

- However, the situation doesn't just stopped there. Yoshino and <Zadkiel> got their legs froze down to the ground with her own power. Natsumi transformed into a mascot character like something repelled <Hanniel>'s power back to her.

- The three are being attacked by their own angel. Shidou is baffled. However, it doesn't stopped there. Shidou also feel he cannot move his body.

"Wha...!?"

"I-I can't move...!?"

- Kotori raise up her voice behind Shidou. Kotori also getting the same phenomenon. Shidou think the feeling is different from when wizard use their territory to make Shidou unable to move. It almost like his own body refuse to react to his brain.

"Don't tell me...!"

- Shidou then noticed Nia turned the part of her Astral Dress into a pen and writing something into <Beelzebub>.

"...! Future describing...!"

- It is the ability that Nia shown him when she revealed <Rasiel> to him. However, the speed that the future is being written right now is far beyond what Nia did. Shidou feel like he's confronting with a god who is writing the future.

- Shidou tried putting his strength into his arms and legs to move forward, but his body below his head do not response to his command.

- While struggling, Nia still continue creating monsters from <Beelzebub>'s page and return her army to what it is before Origami and others defeated it. The monsters then start closing to Shidou and others.

"Dammit...! Move! Move! If I don't do it, then who will save Nia!?"

- The monster then extend its arms to Shidou's head. Shidou raise up his voice and put all his strength into his body.

"— Uoooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooh!"

- That moment — Shidou feel his body is getting hot. A gust of wind then blew violently from Shidou's body blowing all the monsters that were

surrounding him away. The bound that were restraining Shidou's body also get released.

"What is this...!?"

- Shidou astonished at what is happening to his body. However, he realized right away that the power is Yamai's spirit power.

"Shidou!"

- Kotori raise up her voice from behind. Kotori still couldn't move her body. Origami, Yoshino are also the same. Natsumi still has the mascot appearance even now.

- Looking at them, Shidou then understand. It is the same with Miku's 'voice.' Even though <Beelzebub>'s future describing can control the action of people written into it — it cannot completely control someone with spirit power that could resist its power. Even though Shidou's body is a human, he has a spirit power of 8 spirits inside him.

"— I'm going."

- Shidou said and run off from where he was standing. The monster start gathering at Shidou. However, for Shidou right now, he do not feel they're a threat anymore.

"— <Zadkiel>!"

- Shidou shouted and stepped his feet on the ground. The next moment, his surrounding centering from his feet starting to froze. Shidou feel he could manipulate <Zadkiel> at his will. Ah — that's right, he thought. Shidou

finally able to get a grasp of a part of the feeling he feel when his conscious was vague.

- When Shidou's power went berserk at the beginning of this month, he was saved by the spirits. While in that condition, Shidou could manipulate angels at his will. The feeling of that time still remain inside his body and in the bottom of his heart.

- Shidou knew this power cannot be compared with the real power of an angel used by spirits. However — for now, that's enough. For him to defeat the monsters and get to Nia. All 7 angels inside Shidou is more than enough for him to accomplish that.

- Other monsters step onto the monster that has their feet frozen to the ground to reach Shidou. Shidou raise up his right, sharpen the feeling in his heart and call the name.

"<Sandalphon>!"

- A sword then appeared from the air. Shidou swing that sword horizontally and cut the monsters in halves. The compensation of that power is a pain in Shidou's body. His muscle is getting ripped apart. His bone is being creaked opened. Kotori's flame then start curing him from inside. Shidou then shout while feeling a scorching burn and a pain from everywhere within his body,

[Oooooouuhhhhh!]

- It is the power of <Gabriel>, a song of pain reliever. Even though Miku would probably angry at him to call such shout a song, that voice of him relieved the pain within his body to certain extent when it entered his ears.

- Shidou defeated all the monsters in front of him and now reached the front of Nia who is kneeing down on the ground of dark mud.

"Nia! Are you okay!? Pull yourself together!"

"Ah, Aaaaaaaaaaah, Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah—"

- However Nia could not response to Shidou's voice. She still continue raising her voice in agony at the pain in her body. Seeing that, Shidou then realized something and shook his shoulders. He took a deep breath and raise up his voice,

[Nia!]

- Shidou called her with <Gabriel>'s song.

"...!"

- Nia shook her body — like she is acting to Shidou's voice.

[...! Nia!? Can you hear me!? I'm going to help you now!]

"Shi... do..."

- Nia let out a hoarse voice while moving her cheek covered in blood. Shidou understand from her reaction, even though he is not sure of it in details, that Nia's current condition is being caused by the 'pain' in her body. If he use the song of pain reliever to her, then it might be possible for her to regain her conscious. Shidou reach out his hand to Nia. However, before he could place her hand on her shoulder —

"— That's not good if you do that."

- Shidou heard a voice. Something then fly to front of Shidou from the sky in high speed and exploding light before his eyes.

"Uwa!?"



- Shidou fall on his back at the sudden impact. However he couldn't just collapsed here. Shidou quickly return to his posture and look at Nia.

"Eh...?"

- Shidou widen his eyes and let out a voice dumbfoundedly. There is a girl standing in front of him. The girl in blonde hair with a half-up hairstyle and blue eyes. However, there's no facial expression in her face. — Her body is covered with wiring suit similar to Ellen, with white and purple CR-Unit. Shidou feel as if it is a knight's armor from medieval age.

- However, what captured Shidou the most is not how she looked, but rather the laser blade in her hands. At a girl who have her belly pierced by it like a butterfly that got crucified to the ground — at Nia.

"Ni—a? Nia!?"

- Shidou raise up his voice. A clot of blood then came out of Nia's mouth.

"You! What have you done to Nia! Move awaaaaaaay!"

- Shidou grip the hilt of <Sandalphon> tight and swing it to the girl with all his might. However, before <Sandalphon> could reach the girl's body, she use her Territory around her to stop it.

"What...!?"

- Shidou lost his words at the strong and dense Territory. Her Territory is comparable to that of Ellen's. When the girl narrowed her eyes, the Territory expanded out of sudden and blown Shidou's body away.

"Uwa!"

"Shidou...!"

- Origami caught Shidou's body that were blown away just in time. Looks like the effect of <Beelzebub> has worn off since Nia got attacked.

"S-Sorry, Origami. Thanks —"

- However, Shidou could not finished his words. Origami who is holding Shidou's body is staring with a tremble in her face at the girl who pierce her sword through Nia's body.

"Origami...?"

- Origami keep looking at the girl and open her mouth.

"Why are you here — Artemisia Ashcroft."

" ....."

- Even though Origami called her, Artemesia did not even take a glance back at her. She put her strength into the hand that is gripping her laser blade and take the blade out of Nia's body. Nia's body bounced when Artemesia take out her blade and blood start coming out from that wound like a springwater.

"Nia!"

- Shidou shouted and try to get close to her, but he is blocked by the dense Territory. Artemesia raise up her hand and hold it above Nia's chest. Artemesia mumbled something in her mouth and the Territory around her

begin to change. — The same moment, Nia's body also start emitting a dark light.

"..., ....., ....."

- Nia who can't continue her words anymore shake her fingers a little. The next moment, an object that looked like a crystal made by condensing the night into it appeared from Nia's chest. At the same moment, Nia's Astral Dress then dissolved into a dark haze.

".....!"

"Sephira!? But... that color —"

- At the same moment as when Shidou widen his eyes, Origami and Kotori also raise up their voices in astonishment. The crystal that appeared from Nia's chest looked similar to crystal that <Phantom> used to turn Kotori into a spirit. Then —

"...!?"

- Shidou instinctively turned his face into certain direction. Maybe it is because of he is using spirit's power that allow him to have sharper sense, or maybe the presence of the person appearing over there is too out of place. No matter what it is, Shidou feel an 'abnormality' slipped its presence here.

- Not only Shidou who noticed that. All spirits also turned their face into the same direction. With everyone looking, \_that man\_ walk calmly toward Artemesia. The man with ash-blond hair in a black suit.

"Isaac Westcott...!"

- Shidou stare at him and call his name. Westcott then twisted his lips and answer,

"It has been a while since we met directly like this, Itsuka Shidou. I'm glad to see you're in good health."

- Westcott said that while stopping his feet at front of Nia. He look at the black crystal that is floating above her and make a smile full of insanity.

"Splendid. So this is — Inverse Spirit Crystal Qlipha."

- Westcott scrutinize the crystal carefully and took a glance at Artemesia.

"Thanks for you work, Artemesia. Looks like it was a right decision to have you hide yourself just in case. — Itsuka Shidou and everyone from <Ratatoskr>. Let me thank you too. Thanks to you, I'm able to get one step closer to my long-cherished wish."

- Westcott declared and slowly reach his hand out to the crystal.

"What... are you doing!"

"...What, you asked? Haha, is it your place to ask that? \_You who have the power of 8 spirits within you\_."

"W-what...?"

- Shidou said with his brows knitted. Westcott grab the Qlipha with his hand and push it toward his chest.

"Wha...!?"

"Ku — Oooooooooooooooooooooo —!"

- A pitch-black flash then start spreading around the place from Qlipha with a sparking sound. As if the area around them has turned into a night in a blink of an eye. Few seconds later — that 'night' then gathered and absorbed into Westcott. There is no Qlipha to be found anywhere.

"Fu —"

- What is there is only Westcott with his suit burned in the chest covering with spirit power. As if — he is a spirit.

"Haha, Hahahahahahaha! Hahahahahahahahahahahahaha! —"

- Westcott bend his body and raise up a loud laughter. Seeing that, Kotori turned her face into that of fear.

"That can't be... did he just take Sephira into him...?"

"No way that could be..."

- Said that, Shidou then stopped his words. — He recalled what Westcott said earlier.

"The power of... spirit...?"

- Shidou let out a voice dumbfoundedly. Westcott look at him in a good mood.

"That's the case."

- Westcott then raise up his hand in the air, and chant,

"— <Beelzebub>"

- The name of that demon king. "What —" Shidou raise up a panic voice. The book that disappeared earlier now appearing again in Westcott's hand. That moment, Westcott then widen his eyes.

"Oh...? To my surprise, even though this is the first time I've had my hands on a demon king, I know the power and ability of it quite clearly. — I guess this is how?"

- Said that, Westcott then move his finger like he is conducting an orchestra. Next moment, <Beelzebub>'s page start dancing in the air and monsters start appearing out of it.

"What...!?"

- Shidou let out a voice in astonishment. Even though Westcott might have absorbed the power of spirit, he didn't thought Westcott could freely manipulate the demon king in this short amount of time.

"I see... ability to manifest the being written in the book. A power that could bend over the reason and logic of the world, worthy of the name of demon king. Don't you think it's terrific?"

"Ku..."

- Shidou bite his teeth and stare at Westcott. That moment, Ellen who were fighting with Tohka and others come down to the ground next to him.

"Ike"

"Ah, Ellen. Thank you for your work too. — Look, this is the brilliance of a demon king that will light up our path."

"— That is terrific. But, not yet."

"Yes. It is not enough. Just only one is not enough. In order to fulfill our wish."

- Westcott look at Origami and others with a sharp eyes. In the same timing, Tohka and others also ran to Shidou while caughting their breath. Just like Ellen, they noticed the happening over here and decided to come back.

"Shido! Are you okay!?"

"Ah... but, Nia is...!"

- The situation is the worst. Not only Ellen the strongest wizard, but also Artemesia who could match her in ability — and also Westcott who've got the demon king <Beelzebub> in his hands with an army of monsters. Even though there are spirits in Shidou's side, the enemy is too powerful.

- Or rather, for now, they have to treat Nia's wounds. They do not have any time to fight with Westcott. Shidou wonder of what he can do while sweating on his forehead. Westcott then loosen his lips.

"— But for now, I've accomplished the most important objective of getting a demon king in my hands. I guess this is enough for today."

"...!?"

- Shidou knitted his brows at Westcott's words while putting his strength into <Sandalphon> in his hand. He don't know what Westcott is going to do. It might be possible that he said it in order to order Ellen and Artemesia to attack them off-guard. However, Ellen incline her head at Westcott's words.

"Are you sure?"

"Yes. I don't think my body can stand it if I'm going take several demon king into my body at once. And also —"

- Said that, Westcott then make a twisted smile.

"It's better to enjoy the fun one at a time."

'.....!'

- Heard that, Shidou feel the spirits are taking their breath. Shidou feel the incongruous feeling from Westcott he feel since they first him is expanding. Westcott's nature could not be described in just cruel or brutal but rather 'abnormal'.

- The truth of the vague fear he feel from him is not a fear toward someone with power, but rather toward 'something unknown' that is beyond one's common sense.

"— I understand. Then"

"Yes, let's go."

- Westcott said that. Ellen and Artemesia nod to him and kick the ground. They shrink their Territory and float their body up to the sky.





"Let's meet again soon, Itsuka Shidou and all spirits. Do enjoy the rest of your peaceful days even though you only have a little left."

"W-wait a minute! Where are you going —"

"Shidou!"

- Shidou tried to catch them, but Kotori pulled his shirt to stop. While Shidou become distracted by her, Westcott and others disappeared in the sky.

"I know how you feel, but calm down! We can't do anything about that right now! Before that —"

- Kotori then look at Nia who collapsed on the ground with her face up. Shidou then choked and call her name,

"Nia!"

- Shidou kicked the ground and run to Nia who is sinking in a pool of blood. Her wounds still looking very painful. And the worst is the wound that Artemisia made to her. No matter how you looks, he wound is fatal.

"Damn...! Kotori, where is Realizer!?"

"I already ordered! But since we cannot use <Fraxinus> we cannot use the teleporter! I'm preparing a car, so wait a little! But... even <Ratatoskr> never tried treating a spirit with their Sephira removed! I don't know what will happen —"

"Ku —"

- Only a small breathing sound could be heard from Nia. Shidou twisted his face. Origami then come next to him.

"Either way, it's dangerous to leave her like this. Let's stop the bleeding first."

"Y-Yeah, you're right, but how..."

"In case there is a large amount of bleeding from abdomen, it is hard to do so without a specialized equipments. For a standard emergency measure, there is no other way than covering the wound with a cloth. But there is not much effect for that method."

"Then what should I do...!?"

"Calm down. — Natsumi"

"Eh!?"

- Natsumi let out a voice in surprise at sudden call.

"Ah, I-I see...!"

- However, one moment later Natsumi realized the purpose of Origami's words. She run to Nia and summon <Haniel>. Natsumi hold up her bloom-type angel. The next moment, the mirror in the bloom start emitting light and remove the wounds from Nia's body. Natsumi did not cure her, she only use <Haniel>'s power to transform Nia's wounded body to a body without wounds.

"I think... she's a little bit better now. But the blood that she loss won't be returned, and it's not that her organs will also be cured. If we don't quickly give her a treatment..."

- Nia's situation start getting worse and worse as Natsumi said. Even though the wounds in her body are gone, her face has already became pale. The small breathing sound is getting smaller and smaller.

"Damn... Nia! Can you hear me!? The car will come soon!"

- Shidou grip Nia's hand and said like he is praying. However that shout of him do not mean anything. Nia's hands keep becoming colder and colder. Shidou punch the ground out of irritation and powerless feeling. Then —

"...! Wait, Shido"

- Tohka noticed something and sit next to Nia. She sharpen her eyes and look at her for a moment before raise up her face.

"As I thought... Shido, Nia still has some spirit power left!"

"What!?"

- Shidou widen his eyes. Kotori also take a breath noticing something.

"I see... before she were stabbed by that woman who came from the sky, Shidou could returned her conscious back to normal just a little...! At that moment, her Inverse is no longer a complete Inverse anymore!"

"W-What do you mean?"

"It's possible that the Sephira that Westcott took wasn't completed! There probably still a little of Sephira left in her body...!"

".....!"

- Heard Kotori's words, Shidou then shook his shoulder. The words Shidou heard at the beginning of this month came back to his mind.

"Kotori — you said there's a Path between me and everyone ciculating spirit power... right?"

"Yes, what about it..."

- Said to that, Kotori then noticed. She widen her eyes,

"Shidou, don't tell me"

"Yes — this is a bet, but I'll seal her...!"

- Since there's a Path between Shidou and spirits that he sealed, then it might be possible for Shidou to share Tohka and other spirits' spirit power to Nia once he open his Path with her.

- However, Shidou still don't know if her affection for him is enough to be sealed. But it is as Kotori said earlier, for now, he have to believe — that Shidou and other's feeling are already reaching Nia.

"— Nia. Please. Please... accept me. Even if you're going to take all of my power, then I don't mind at all! So —"

- Shidou said like he is pleading to Nia. Shidou move his face near Nia's face and put his lips onto her lips. Shidou stiffen himself at the coldness of her mouth. However, next moment Shidou feel a warmth is being poured into him, even though in a very little amount.

".....!"

- That is no doubt the same feeling as when he sealed spirits power. Shidou release his lips from her and call Nia's name.

"Nia! Nia!"

"Wake up, Nia!"

"Nia... san!"

- Other spirits also call for her. And not long after, Nia eyelids started moving. She then say a word with her hoarsed voice.

"..., I can... hear it... already... You don't... need to... shout..."

"—! Nia!"

- Shidou shouted but Nia closed her eyes again. She moved her lips without any voice. — But Shidou could see her mouth is moving in a shape that says 'Thanks'.

## Epilogue - You know that, Nia!?

---

"...Hmp?"

- Westcott is sitting in a room in DEM Industry's Japan office in a good mood. He is looking at the ominous-looking book in front of him.

"— I see, this is interesting. Anything that I want to know are flowing right into my mind. Demon king <Beelzebub>, huh. Looks like I'm lucky this time. Thanks to that, I just learn something really interesting."

- Said that, Westcott then make a sound in his throat. Ellen who is standing in front of him then incline her head.

"Something interesting?"

"Yes. Come here."

"Yes..."

- Ellen make a wonder face and walk to Westcott. Westcott stand up from the chair and place his hand on Ellen's shoulder. Then —

"...! This is..."

- Ellen widen her eyes in amazement. The information Westcott gained from <Beelzebub> are being shared to Ellen from his touching. Ellen should see an image flowing into her head.

"...Changing the history? So the world right now has been rewritten once?"

- Ellen make a dubious voice. That is what written in <Beelzebub>. To change the history. The forbidden action that acts against the will of god. A pipe dream. But both Westcott and Ellen already knew that it isn't impossible.

"Yes, looks like Itsuka Shidou borrowed <Nightmare>'s hand and travel back in time in order to change Tobiichi Origami's past. ...Fu, he sure done it."

"But for that thing to happen —"

- However, Ellen suddenly stopped her words and start grasping her chest. Few seconds later, a blood start oozing out pass the blouse she is wearing. Ellen frown and look at her blood in her hands.

"This is..."

"Looks like the fact that you remembered the past cause your wound to reproduce itself."

- Westcott lift up the tip of his lips and said. Even though such a thing won't happen for normal humans — but Wizards are the one who use Realizer to make an imagination in their head to become real. For Ellen, the strongest wizard, she unconsciously turned that intense image of the past in her head into a reality.

"...I see, so she could wounded me once in the last world. ...Even though she have to thank <Ratatoskr>, this is very displeasing."

- Said that, Ellen then knit her brows. Westcott think her reaction is not a strange thing. In Westcott's memory, except Origami, there's only one person who ever successfully wounded Ellen.



- Ellen move her brows a little and expand Territory around her to relieve the pain. Not too long, Ellen return her face to posture to her normal self.

"But — I see. <Beelzebub>, the power of it is worthy of its demon king name."

"I agree, but..."

- Westcott shrugged his shoulders at Ellen's words.

"Looks like the demon king is still not in its complete form."

"— Not complete form?"

"Yes. Looks like before we finished on <Sister>, Itsuka Shidou could successfully return a portion of <Sister>'s conscious back. Looks like he also getting used to angel's power as well."

"..., I'm sorry. I should have done it myself."

- Ellen said with a shamed voice. However, Westcott only shrugged.

"You don't need to worry yourself over it. I'm very satisfied at today's result. Even though it's incompleted, but this is a firm step toward our long-cherished wish. I will get that missing half one day. I have high expectations for you, Ellen."

"— Sure"

- Ellen straighten her posture and nodded back to Westcott. Westcott also look to the door where a girl is standing.

"Of course, you too — Artemesia."

"...Yes."

- Artemesia Bel Ashcroft answered back in a quiet voice.



- In the resting room in underground <Ratatoskr> facility, the spirits and Shidou are waiting for Nia's treatment to complete. Nia who lost her conscious after that got taken to this facility in emergency, and is under a treatment using Realizer.

- Even though the treatment will take some times and they have been ordered to go back to the apartment for the time being, everyone is worrying about Nia and decided to stay.

- However, from staying all night for finishing book, followed by a fight with DEM, they're now completely exhausted. Even though everyone is trying their best to stay up, they feel their eyelids is getting heavier and heavier.

"Mu..."

- Tohka rubbed her eyes. Shidou make a wry smile at her.

"Are you okay? If you're sleepy then you can go to sleeping room."

"Mu... no, I'm fine. I decided to stay up until Nia wake up."

"Nn... okay. Then, let's try stay up a little bit more."

- The door open when Shidou said that. Kotori come in the room while making a yawn.

"Fuua... ah, everyone's still awake?"

"You too. That was some pretty big yawn. Don't push yourself too hard, okay?"

"D-Don't be annoying."

- Kotori avert her eyes away while folding her arms.

"Don't be sulky. ...Anyway, what about Nia's condition?"

- Shidou asked. Kotori then let out a breath from her nose and look at Shidou and others.

"— For now, she already passed the critical condition. It's all thanks to emergency aid by <Haniel> and circulation of spirit power after connecting Path. She shouldn't get too bad now. Since we already finished treating her with Medical Realizer, it isn't strange if she's going to wake up soon."

"Oh, really?"

"Yes, so —"

- Before Kotori could finished her words, a terminal in her pocket start making sound.

"— Speak of the devil"

- Kotori looked at what is written in her terminal and point to the door.

"Nia already woke up. You're going to see her, aren't you?"

'...!'

- Heard Kotori's words, the spirits who were completely exhausted until earlier open their eyes wide and nod back to her. See that, Kotori make a wry smile and urge everyone.

"This way, follow me."

- Shidou and others follow Kotori out of the resting room into the ICU room. In the room, a lot of machines could be seen on the white floor with cables coming out the wall. Nia is currently inside a treatment pod inside the room. The pod already has its cover removed and Reine is taking out Nia's oxygen mask

"...Ah, everyone..."

"Nia!"

- Shidou called her name and run to her in short steps. The spirits also followed him and gather around Nia.

"Are you... okay?"

"Kaka, looks like you're fine now."

"Agreement. I'm glad to see you're okay."

- The spirits said. Nia look at everyone and loosen her lips.

"Ehehe... Looks like somehow, I'm popular now...? I'll give you a sign in turn okay?"

- Nia said jokingly and let out her breath. She then look at Shidou.

"...I'm sorry, Boy. That I got caught by DEM —"

"...!"

- Shidou grip Nia's hand tight to make her stop her words.

"Boy..."

"It's okay. For now.... Thank you — for being alive."

- Shidou with an eye like he is crying. Nia turned her face down for a moment before she laugh bashfully.

"Ahaha... what should I do, I'm really bad at an atmosphere like this."

- Said that, Nia then make a big yawn.

"Eh, this is strange. I think I've been sleeping all the time..."

"Haha... it's not strange... it's now this late..."

- Shidou said that and look at the clock in the room before he mumbled "Ah". Shidou think of something before he look at Reine.

"Um, sorry, but can I take Nia outside a little?"

"...Nn? Well, since her condition seems pretty stable now, if only for a little time then it should be fine... where are you taking her to?"

"Well... that is something to look forward to."

- Shidou hold up his finger and said. Nia and other spirits incline their head in wonder.

- Few minutes later, Shidou and others are at the rooftop of the building that <Ratatoskr> has its entrance to underground facility in.

- The surrounding are all dark and cold like the show going to fall anytime soon. Everyone is wearing a coat with gloves and a scarf to protect themselves from a cold.

"— Hya, outside sure is really cold~! Hey, Yoshino-san, isn't it cold? Do you want some body warmth to lessen your cold?"

"N-no, um..."

- Miku who jumped out to the rooftop before everyone raise up her voice in high spirits. Yoshino make a wry smile. Natsumi keep catching Yoshino's clothes like to protect her.

"Do you feel cold, Nia?"

"Nn, I'm fine."

- Shidou asked Nia while pushing her wheelchair. Even though Reine gave her a permission to go outside, Nia still unable to walk on her own.

"Then... why are you taking me here?"

"Yeah. I think it will start soon..."

- Said that, the sky then start changing. The sunlight start coming through the interval between buildings. The sky that was pitch dark starting to render in colors.

"Ooh...!?"

"This is... amazing!"

- The spirits widen their eyes and raise an admiration voice. Nia also make a surprised face, look at the sun that slowly coming up and turn her face up to Shidou.

"Boy, this..."

"Yeah. I thought the sun should be rising soon. I was too busy with Comico and almost forgot that today is January 1. It's the first sunrise of the year. — it's perfect for your new start, Nia."

"...Haha, how show-off are you."

- Nia said that and laugh. She then turned her face forward once again and look at the sunrise for a while. Few seconds after that, Nia mumble,

"...Boy"

"Hm...?"

"Thank you... for a lot of things."

"Don't worry about that. Even me got everyone's help."

"...Once my condition better, I think I'll meet Takajou once again."

"Yeah, I think that's good. That person is a good person. I think."

"I think, you said..."

- Nia laugh again at what Shidou said.

"...How should I put it, even though it's annoying to get my power stolen by DEM, but I now feel somewhat better. It has been nearly 30 years since I have <Rasiel>... but I'm surely not worthy of that power."

"30 years — you were spirit for that long?"

- It was Origami who response to Nia's words.

"Right. Well, I think about 27 or 28 years to be exact. But when you round up it's the same isn't it. How do you think? I'm not looking like so, right?"

- Nia said jokingly while touching her cheek with her hand. Kotori then look at her,

"I think spirit power is causing your body cell to age slower. But since now you already have your power sealed, you're going to get older really fast. Prepare yourself."

"Uwa~. Now that you mentioned it. Ah, let me change what I just said earlier. Thank you for everything until now, <Rasiel>."

- Nia said that and Kotori laugh. Nia then remembered something and look at everyone.

"...Come to think of it, since when did you all became spirits?"

"Ah, it was 5 years ago for me. I think Miku was a year ago, wasn't her? Origami is only recently. Other than that are pure spirits."

"Eh...?"

- Nia make a wonder looks at what Kotori just said. She then incline her head and continue,

"Pure spirits...? \_But isn't spirits are all ex-humans?\_"

At those words.

"Eh...?"

Everyone in the rooftop widen their eyes.

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## Afterword

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- Yes, there's a new girl this time too. Mangaka & otaku spirit, Nia. Even though her Astral dress is a nun, she is yearning for an outside world.

- Even though the base design is a nun, the decoration of her veil is a pen and a feather duster, a beam part of her Astral Dress is in ink-color, the middle part of her Astral Dress is a manga panel. They're a very subtle details made into the design.

- Even though DAL has new girl for almost every volume, Nia's characterization is pretty risky. Although this might not be the case universally, but normally it's hard to make light novel girls have short hair and wear glasses. In Nia's case, her glasses only present when she's wearing her private uniform. The reason behind that is it's hard for such character to gain popularity. Small breasts? That's a privilege.

- When I make characters, especially for girls, usually I use both factor that I like and factor that readers might like. The balance between these two factors are very tricky to made. If the former has more weight, then the character might become too sharp and reader might not like that character. If I weight the latter too much, then the character will be a look-alike of other characters from other series.

- In case of Nia, she's a character with a lot of former. I believe her character is something never existed in DAL before. I enjoy writing her very much.

- For my personal impression, I think as more volumes of a series coming out, it's becoming gradually easier to introduce character with former factor since once the more girls there are, the more diverse is required. Even though I love characters with negative thought, but if I say I'm going to make Natsumi the main girl, everyone will probably stop me. Ku...

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